



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823

In42n

1832

v.2









THE
NEW GIL BLAS;
OR,
PEDRO OF PENAFLOP.

BY
HENRY D. INGLIS,
AUTHOR OF "SPAIN IN 1830," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN.

1832.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY MANNING AND SMITHSON,
LONDON-HOUSE YARD.

823

Im 42m

1832

v. 2

CONTENTS VOL. II.

CHAP. XV.

PAGE

WHICH narrates the Death of Paulo, notwithstanding the arguments of the Physician; and shows the sacrifice I made, to purchase a hundred Masses for his Soul - - - - -	1
---	---

XVI.

The Confession of Paulo the Smuggler - - -	17
--	----

XVII.

From which some knowledge of the World may be acquired; and wherein my good opinion of Man- kind brings my Gold into jeopardy - - -	53
---	----

CHAPTER XVIII.

	PAGE
Containing the First Part of the entertaining Story of Gaston de Pedralba, the One-eyed - -	82

XIX.

Being the continuation of the Voyage to Alicante; and concluding with the sequel of the entertain- ing Story of Gaston de Pedralba, the One-eyed -	136
--	-----

XX.

In which it is recounted how the Alcalde of Tarifa's Superstition proved stronger than his Eye-sight ; and wherein a certain mysterious Personage is again brought upon the tapis - - -	159
--	-----

XXI.

In which the Reader will gain much insight into the shifts of a needy Caballero - - -	190
--	-----

XXII.

Which may be considered an Introduction to the most extraordinary Adventure yet related in this Book	213
---	-----

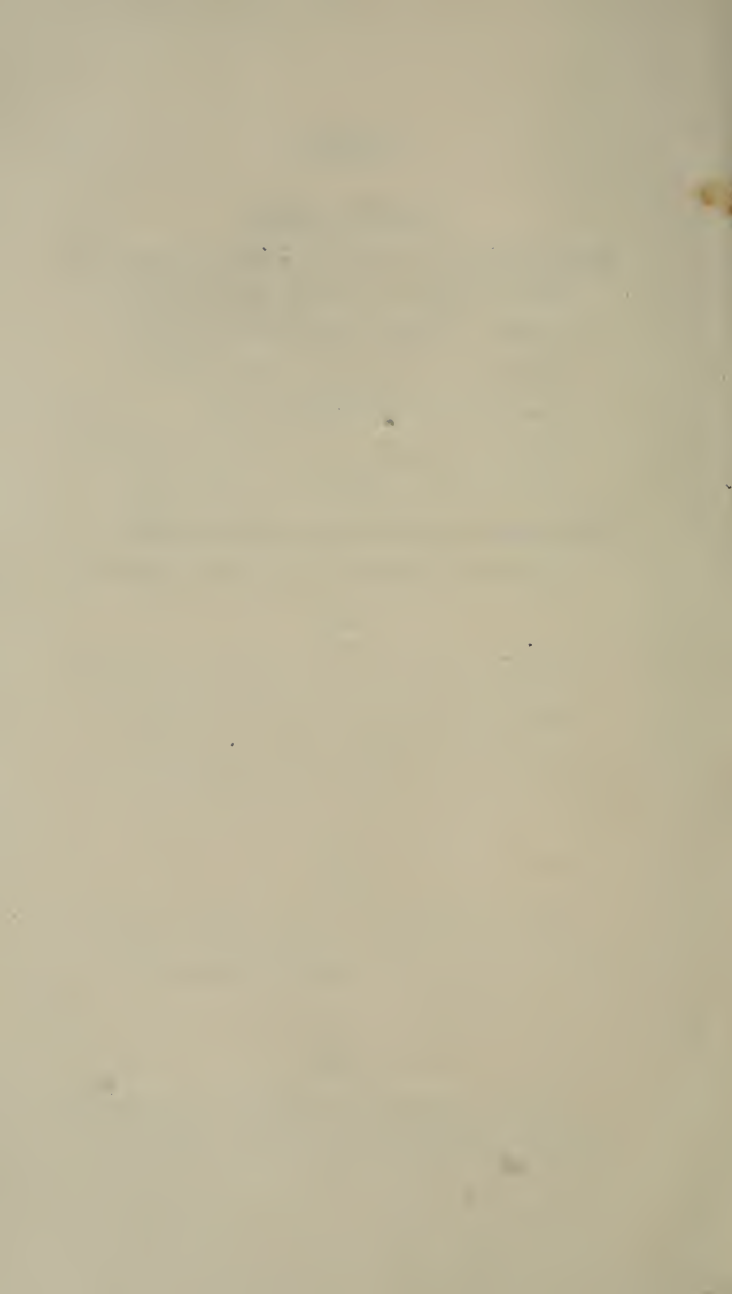
CHAPTER XXIII.

PAGE

The Continuation of my Adventure with the Valencian, and the consummation of his Revenge,—from the conclusion of which it will be seen, how much truth there is in the Proverb, which says—" It is an ill wind that blows nobody good " - -	241
---	-----

XXIV.

From which more may be learned of Spanish Charac- ter, than was ever before told in so small a space	264
---	-----



THE NEW GIL BLAS.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH NARRATES THE DEATH OF PAULO, NOTWITHSTANDING THE ARGUMENTS OF THE PHYSICIAN; AND SHOWS THE SACRIFICE I MADE, TO PURCHASE A HUNDRED MASSES FOR HIS SOUL.

FREED from the danger to which I had been exposed, I had now leisure to think of the wounded Paulo, whose groans had from time to time assured me, that Bernardo had not succeeded in sending him first out of the world. I found the wounded man not so near death as I had expected; the ball had not lodged in his side, but had passed obliquely, only making a furrow in it, and it might be, splintering a rib or

two. This was a most joyful discovery, for having no skill in seamanship, I might just as well have been thrown overboard by Bernardo, as left in the *mystico* by myself, under the rocky coast of Granada. With my assistance, Paulo crawled upon deck: he did not require to be told, that his assistance was needed; his wound prevented him from handling the ropes, but by his directions I was able to do what was required; and I even speedily began to comprehend what was necessary to be done without directions.

Meantime, the wind continued fair, and became more moderate, which was fortunate for a vessel manned so slenderly; and we rapidly slid over the broad-shouldered waves—the rock of Gibraltar and the Barbary mountains lessening behind us: but the *mystico* made more rapid progress towards its destination, than Paulo did towards his recovery. His wound, although far

from mortal, began to look worse; for when I had succeeded in stanching the blood, my skill was exhausted; and although for my own sake I wished to take upon myself all the labour of managing the mystico, yet, habit frequently stretched out Paulo's arm to pull a rope, or steer the vessel,—and such exertions greatly diminished his chances of recovery.

The presumed virtues of the relics inspired Paulo with considerable hopes; it was evident, that to my possessing them he attributed the issue of the contest with his companions,—and he appeared to look with some confidence to their powers of cure upon himself. For my own part, the manner in which I possessed myself of these relics, and the use I had made of them, almost forbade me to attribute my deliverance to them; but I could nevertheless have no objection to humour Paulo; and accordingly producing the box, I would have delivered it into his hands,

but he still believing me to be a friar, notwithstanding my sabre and the prowess I had shown, refused to handle any thing so holy, and the task of trying their efficacy therefore devolved upon me; but no effects being visible, Paulo showed by the expression of his countenance, that he believed the protection of heaven was withdrawn from him on account of his sins--arguing, by the by, a want of faith in the relics, which might of itself be a sufficient explanation of their inefficacy.

Paulo was greatly younger than his companions; and although in his countenance there was much of the bold, unlicensed expression of a sea rover, his years, or his crimes, had not yet been many enough to plant in his face the hard lines that at once marked Bernardo and Lopez as men familiar with blood and rapine; and as he perceived that death was making approaches to him, he made a sign that I should draw near;

and he then communicated to me his desire to pour his confession into my holy ear: but disclosing to him a vow that I had made, to do no act that implied sanctity in myself, until by certain penance I had freed myself from the blood of Lopez and Bernardo, our desire now was to gain our port with the utmost speed, that Paulo might not depart without being prepared.

Favourable winds carried us along the coast of Granada, and the next morning at day-break, we perceived Malaga lying at the bottom of its fine bay, which we soon crossed by favour of a south wind which then sprung up; and shortly after, we dropped anchor in the harbour. No sooner was our voyage thus happily brought to an end, than I despatched a messenger for a priest,—an order, in this town sufficiently numerous; and while waiting his arrival, I seized the first moment of leisure that had been mine since the navigation of the mystico devolved upon

me, of examining the hold, and cabin of the vessel, and of ascertaining as near as possible, to what amount of property I was likely to fall heir by my own prowess, and the probable demise of Paulo. I found it to be considerable, chiefly in specie; and as may easily be believed, I indulged in no small self-gratulation upon the issue of the trick I had put upon the dignitaries of Tarifa, which had not only delivered me from captivity, but had led to another adventure, by which I was in a fair way of making my fortune, at the expense of two villains' lives, of whom the world was well rid. As for Paulo, if it was the will of God that he should die, the will of God be done: and as these reflections passed through my mind, "poor Isabel," I said, winding them up,—“where now art thou? I trust in thy husband's arms, and as happy as I am. I have not yet quite forgotten thee; and I should be a hard-hearted rogue if I

had, for without thy aid, how should I have ever delivered myself from the tower of Tarifa."

I had scarcely dismissed these thoughts, when I perceived a boat put off from shore, in which was the holy man—a friar, of the Carmelite order—who was about to receive poor Paulo's confession. When we had exchanged salutations, I made the friar acquainted with the cause that rendered it impossible for me to receive Paulo's confession; but I requested that, as I felt much interest in the dying man, I might be permitted to learn his history (which I had no doubt the confession would include), from the lips of the confessor: to this the friar made no objection, provided Paulo authorised the communication; and he proceeded, accordingly, to the couch of the smuggler.

"I trust," said I, when he returned, "your ghostly counsel has healed the wounds of the dying man, and that his sins may press lightly upon him in purgatory."

“ His sins,” replied the confessor, “ are heavy: they will scarcely let the soul be delivered under a hundred masses.”

Saying nothing of the hundred masses, which I foresaw would form a large deduction from my inheritance, and trusting that a less number might be accepted by the convent, I reminded the friar of the promise he had made, to communicate to me the particulars of Paulo’s history.

“ I have not forgotten it,” said he; “ ’t is an unhallowed story, and is now so fresh in my memory, that I will go and commit it to paper: the dying man not only authorises me to communicate his history to you, but he desires that you should be his executor.—If you will come this evening, before vespers, to the convent of the Carmelites, and there inquire for Father Ambrosio, you shall have your curiosity gratified.”

I promised to be punctual: and immediately

sought the couch of Paulo, who showed in his countenance, how consolatory the discourse of Father Ambrosio had been; but although the wounds of his mind were healed, those of his body seemed likely speedily to prove how opportune had been the spiritual aid of the confessor.

Notwithstanding that the recovery of Paulo would have been more prejudicial to my interest than even if I should have to pay for a hundred masses to pray his soul out of purgatory, I did not on that account neglect to desire the attendance of the most skilful physician in Malaga. But this kindness could not delay the fate of poor Paulo.

“I see no reason,” said the physician, “why this man should die.”

“Were it not for the wound in his side,” returned I, “neither do I.”

“But,” returned he, “the wound ought not to kill him. The bullet entered the left side of

the chest, and passing under the skin, injured the pectoral muscle; but was stopped, and ejected by the cartilages of the ribs, before it reached the sternum."

"All this may be very true," said I; "but the man sinks nevertheless; please to observe—" but just at this moment a deep moan rose from Paulo's couch: "I fear," said I, "he is already dead; that moan sounded like the moan of a dying man."

"Impossible," said the physician, rising; "he cannot be dead; nothing, I tell you, can be more simple than the treatment of such wounds,—why, sir, twenty such could not kill a man."

"Nevertheless," said I, leading him to Paulo's couch, "you see he has died of one."

"I see no such thing," returned the physician with asperity; "and give me leave again to explain how it is impossible that such a wound as this should——"

“Pardon me,” interrupted I; “I am overpowered with a sense of your learning and acuteness, and quite agree with you in opinion, that no man can die of such a wound; since then your patient cannot be dead, please to apply to him for payment of your fee,—it is justly earned by so excellent a discovery:” but the physician perceiving that I meant a jest at the expense of his theory, which he valued even beyond fees, turned from me with an air of offended dignity,—leaving me very well satisfied with a theory which had saved me a crown.

Having provided for the Christian burial of the unfortunate smuggler, I ascertained the amount of my inheritance, which was burdened only with as many masses as might suffice for the deliverance of Paulo’s soul, which I resolved should not suffer from my niggardliness; though at the same time, I could not help thinking a hundred masses an extravagant demand for the

deliverance of a soul which had not been in the body more than five-and-twenty years. And now the vesper hour approaching, I hastened to the convent of the Carmelites, where I found Father Ambrosio, who received me with much courtesy—and with whom, when I had informed him of the death of Paulo, I immediately entered upon business, respecting the masses.

“Father,” said I, “I have a proposal to make to you, which may probably be acceptable. I am a pilgrim, who have travelled over all the world in search of relics wherewith to enrich the convent of the Carthusians in the city of Murcia; fortune has greatly favoured my design—for I now possess some relics, the least valuable of which would increase the revenues of your convent fourfold. Heaven, I may truly say, threw me into the power of those smugglers; of whom Paulo was one,—that the excellent virtues of these relics might receive confirma-

tion,—for to what but to them, can I ascribe my deliverance from the swords of two assassins, whose murderous weapons were blunted,—and who were themselves overpowered, by one weak servant of God, not on account of his own worthiness—which were, alas ! weak security—but by virtue of the holy relics which were concealed in his bosom, and to whose efficacy he trusted: these,” continued I, drawing from my bosom the box containing them, “are the relics of which I speak.”

As I opened the lid, the eyes of the friar glistened; for having no reason to doubt the truth of my story, especially since Paulo’s tale must have informed him of the circumstances that had taken place, such an acquisition could not fail to bring the convent into repute; and to attract many to its gates, from a hope of deriving bodily advantage as well as spiritual consolation from the sacred relics contained within its walls.

In drawing forth the relics, I gave to the Carmelite friar the same explanations that I had given to the smugglers, in which there was in fact no fraud,—the relics being doubtless as genuine, and probably as valuable, as I represented them to be. When I exhibited to the friar the paper containing the two hairs,—he said, after gravely regarding it for some time, “I confess, that until this moment, I was not able to see these precious hairs : your faith, warmed by a contemplation of the holy places amid which the relics have been preserved, has naturally given you an advantage over me ; but now this most inestimable of them all, begins to be visible ; this is indeed a prize.” But from the peculiar expression of the friar’s countenance, I could perceive that his thanks were given to me less for the relic itself, than for a hint which might be turned to profitable account. I was sensible that the relics were worth more than

the price of a hundred masses ; but perceiving the difficulty of disposing of them advantageously, without, at the same time, continuing the disguise of a friar, which was not a character much suited to my habits ; and knowing besides that my right to dispose of them at all, might chance some day to be questioned, I concluded a bargain with the Carmelite friar ; stipulating, in return for the relics, a hundred masses for Paulo's soul—to be said at the shortest possible intervals—that no delay might take place in Paulo reaping the benefit of my generosity. As for depriving the Carthusian convent in Murcia of these relics, I alleged that the deliverance of Paulo's soul was a deed of greater piety than enriching that convent ; a reason, to the conclusiveness of which the Carmelite friar found no difficulty in assenting. The box, in which the relics had been inclosed, I still retained, to serve as a depository for a part of my gold.

The affair of the masses being thus satisfactorily terminated, the friar drew forth Paulo's confession. "This," said he, as he put it into my hand, "is the history of that unhappy man whose soul, but for our masses, might remain an eternity in purgatory. I have omitted the discourse that we held together, touching his sins, and their expiation; and have but noted down the narrative of his life, which is written as near as may be, in the very words spoken by himself."

Soon after receiving the paper, I took my leave of Father Ambrosio; and having already disposed of the mystico, and filled a bag with the specie I had found, I took advantage of the darkness, to cast off my friar's habit; and hide it in a hedge of aloes. I then hired an apartment in the Posada de los tres Reyes, and seized an early opportunity of reading the memoir, which will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONFESSION OF PAULO, THE SMUGGLER.

“ I WAS born in the city of Alhama: my father was an extensive wine and olive grower; and my mother, being sister to a canon attached to the archbishopric of Granada, it was determined that I should be brought up to the church. At an early age I was sent from my paternal home to the care of the canon at Granada, who shortly after obtained for me the situation of one of the archbishop's pages. I was well fed, well lodged, and kindly treated: my duties consisted in waiting upon my patron at table, and attending him when he went from

home; and the remainder of my time was occupied with those studies which were pointed out by the chaplain, as proper for youths destined for the priesthood.

“ At this period of my life, my whole ambition was, to rise some day to eminence in the church: every thing I saw around me, contributed to foster this inclination. The good archbishop, whose revenues were ample, seemed to pass his days in the most agreeable manner: during the morning, he was occupied in discharging the functions of his high dignity; and I then had an opportunity of observing the great respect that was rendered to him: his table was splendidly furnished, and the sofa upon which he took his siesta, the most inviting in the world: the evening was passed in conversation with his friends, diversified by an occasional cup of chocolate and Naples biscuit; and, in short, I was enchanted with the life of an arch-

bishop. Nor did that of my uncle the canon seem contemptible; so that while I continued to be a boy, I was perfectly satisfied with the decision of my parents respecting me, as well as with the prospects upon which I thought I might reasonably build.

“ Although the manner of living practised by the archbishop of Granada, was not of a kind calculated to repel by its severity, he was nevertheless most strict in his devotions, which were doubtless inspired by the sincerest piety; and the conversations which my patron sometimes condescended to hold with me, touching the excellent choice of a life devoted to God, joined with the studies which I unremittingly pursued, early awoke in me a real inclination for the service of the church,—a zeal for its welfare,—and not only a firm persuasion in the orthodoxy of its tenets, but no inconsiderable spirit of devotion in the exercise of its observances; so that

of all the archbishop's pages, I was looked upon as the most promising.

“ The time approached when, duly qualified by years and knowledge, I should rise into the priesthood; and no youth ever looked forward to the realization of some worldly hope with more eager longings, than I did to my exaltation. No thought of the world I was for ever quitting, or of the pleasures from which I was for ever separating myself, threw a shade over my mind. The world I scarcely knew; and its pleasures, I had been accustomed to think, were sinful; and if I ever bestowed a thought upon the one or the other, the thought was accompanied by a sincere ejaculation of thanksgiving, that the part I had chosen excluded me from their temptations. Alas! in these days, how imperfectly did I know myself; or how little suspect the impotency of those preparations against human passions, which consist only in despising

them. My last preparation for the priesthood, was a pilgrimage to the altar of the holy Shepherdess in the Capuchin convent of Seville; and immediately upon the accomplishment of this act of piety, I said mass for the first time, and sat down at the bishop's table.

“ With the high patronage I enjoyed, there was little reason to doubt, that at no distant period the archbishop would provide for me; and it so happened, that the chaplain in the house of the Conde de Peñuoz, intendénte of the province, dying, I obtained his place through the kind recommendation of my patron, who at the same time assured me, that this was but a temporary provision; as my knowledge and piety were deserving of higher preferment. I had then but newly completed my twenty-second year; but so high a recommendation as that of the archbishop, joined with my known reputation for strictness and devotion, prevented

any demur on account of my youth; and I was accordingly admitted into the family of the intendant, in the capacity of chaplain; though without the duties of confessor being joined with it; these being then performed by an old Carthusian friar.

“ The family of the intendant consisted of only one daughter; who, with the intendant’s lady, and a nephew—then but a boy—were all the inmates of the house into which I was admitted. Ah! that its doors had been for ever shut against me: little did I imagine how soon they were to stand betwixt me and my God.

“ To the society of women I had hitherto been a stranger; glimpses of female countenances I had indeed caught; and on my pilgrimage to Seville, one I saw, that had for a moment riveted my eyes; but the only females with whom I had ever conversed, and that through a grating, were the sisters in the con-

vent of Augustinian nuns, to whom my uncle the canon was confessor; and these, the dedicated to heaven, I regarded with veneration only less sacred than that which I rendered to heaven itself.

“ The very first night I slept in the intendant’s house, I awoke in the utmost perturbation from a dream, in which I found myself kneeling before an image that bore the likeness of Doña Francesca. I endeavoured to banish the recollection of the vision,—and slept again,—but while I dreamt that I said mass, I heard no response but the soft voice of Doña Francesca, the morning put these visions to flight; my habitual thoughts, studies, and duties, filled up the day, during which, no vain imagination broke in upon my meditations, or disturbed my devotions; but with night, came the image of Doña Francesca,—more distinct,—more abiding. Long ere morning dawned, I prayed earnestly to be de-

livered from this visitation; but even while I prayed, the lovely vision kneeled beside me,—for lovely it was. Doña Francesca, the only child of the intendant, was then scarcely seventeen: such beauty I might have fancied the attribute of a glorified saint,—but that such should be the portion of a daughter of earth!! Oh! what a world of knowledge did that discovery reveal to me!

“ Long, and earnestly, did I resist temptation; I redoubled my attention to my devotional exercises; I subjected myself to severe penance; I prayed, I fasted. I retired for a time to the monastery of the Carthusian friars, and practised the most rigid austerities. I even made a second pilgrimage, to the Santa Forma in the Escorial; but, alas! no penance, no fastings, no prayers, could shut out the image of Doña Francesca. Often, when no eye but the eye of God was upon me, I would walk at the dead of night to

the secluded valley of the Daro, and entering the chapel dedicated to St. Teresa, throw myself before her shrine, and with tears streaming from my eyes, and beating my breast, implore the aid of that virtuous saint to deliver me from the snare which the devil had prepared. But all my efforts were unavailing,—and all my prayers unanswered. By day and by night, the countenance of Francesca was before me,—and at times, even unhallowed visions,—the contrivances of the devil; such as are fraught with death to the souls of God's servants, would intrude upon my slumbers. Once, as I fancied that I prostrated myself before the shrine of St. Teresa, the saint stepped from the canvass, and extended her hand to raise me from my prostration: it was a hand, such as might belong to a glorified saint,—powerful, yet scarcely palpable; but as I touched it, it changed into a human hand; and the face and form were the face and

form of Francesca, and I madly pressed the hand to my lips; but the touch was fire,—it ran like lightning to my heart; and a throb that seemed ready to burst my side, woke me to a consciousness of my sinfulness and misery.

“During all this time no repining ever arose in my mind, that I had dedicated my life to the church; no unhallowed hopes, nor even erring thoughts, were ever cherished in my waking hours. It was a fierce and constant struggle that I maintained for religion and virtue. I knew that human passion was warring for the mastery; but never did one thought of surrender enter into my mind. ‘God’s servant I am,’ I said, ‘and God’s servant I will remain—perseverance will surely in the end deliver me from this trial.’ But while thus hoping for deliverance, an event occurred that wrought a fearful change in my feelings.

“I have said that the confessor in the inten-

dant's family was an old Carthusian friar ; one day this holy man sent for me, and having taken me into his little apartment, and shut the door, he addressed me thus :—‘ I know well,’ said he, ‘ the sanctity of your character, and admire in you that piety and knowledge which have so justly recommended you to the good opinion of our most illustrious archbishop. I do not, therefore, hesitate to confide to you—as indeed seems to be a duty—a secret that was yesterday reposed in me. I need not tell one, who has had so able instructors as it has been your good fortune to have, that the secrets of the confessional ought to rest in the breast of the confessor ; but there are occasions, upon which duty may decide otherwise ; and when you have heard my communication, you will doubtless perceive the object of it.

“ ‘ Yesterday evening I confessed the Doña Francesca : I saw, for the first time, a struggle

in the breast of that innocent young person, whose confessions have never yet needed penance or rebuke, and I encouraged her.

“ ‘Alas ! father,’ said she, ‘I have been very wicked ; and dare scarcely hope for absolution.’

“ ‘If you are repentant, my child,’ said I, ‘I am authorised to absolve you from all sin, in the name of the blessed Trinity : surely thy sins are not heinous—no deadly sin can yet have—’ I would have proceeded,—but she interrupted me.

“ ‘Say not so,’ said she ; ‘mine I fear is a deadly sin ; and alas ! how can you comfort me, or absolve me ; how can God pardon me, since I dare not say, that I repent?’

“ ‘Speak not thus, my child,’ said I ; ‘confide thy wanderings to me, and it may be that the avenue to thy heart may be found ;’ and Francesca then said, ‘Father, I have dared to breathe a wish in secret, that Paulo, the pious

Paulo, were even such as I am, that God might have one servant the less.'

" 'Ah, my child,' said I, 'what do I hear? thou hast dared then to lift upon Paulo the eye of sinful affection! Beware, beware how thou spreadest a snare for one of the most faithful of God's servants.'

" 'No, father,' replied she, 'this I have not done,—I have not yet been so wicked; but I have indeed thought, that if *his* vows had not separated him from human affection, I might have been worthy of his esteem,—his love.'

"The Benedictine friar then continued: 'Paulo,' said he, 'my duty does not permit me to relate what farther converse passed between Doña Francesca and her confessor. Thus far, I have fulfilled a duty I owe to myself,—to you,—and especially to the erring maiden, and her excellent parents, whose pious generosity this convent has so often experienced. I would not

willingly wound their feelings, by revealing to them, the sinful wanderings of a child who is their hope and their pride; but to thee, Paulo, knowing well, and believing in thy reputation for sanctity, I have made known the unhappy truth, that thou mayest hasten to withdraw thyself from the house of the Intendénte, lest the soul of his child be endangered by a continuance in sinful thoughts. Happy, thrice happy are they, my young friend, who, like thee, have chosen the service of God early—ere sinful passions have begun to plead, and the sanctity and austerities of whose lives are as armour against the assaults of the wicked one. I know that thou wilt not neglect my warning. I perceive that thou art somewhat disturbed,—and it is natural thou shouldst: this may be a wile of the devil,—a snare to lure thee from thy allegiance to God; but be calm, my son, be fervent in thy devotions; to thee there is little danger; but as thou mayest

be held accountable for the soul of Doña Francesca, and as thou valuest her salvation, leave the abode where the tempter is busy; I will not fail to ask for thee, the assistance of our patron saint.'

"Such was the communication of the Carthusian friar. With as much calmness as I could assume, I thanked him for the important disclosure he had made; and promised without delay, to adopt the line of conduct that duty seemed to point out.

"Dreadful was the tumult of my soul, as I left the convent of the Carthusians: the fire that I had hitherto kept down, now burst into flame; it was no longer the blood of an anchorite, but the full tide of passion that rushed through my veins: a delirium of new and intoxicating fancies swam on my brain,—this, I said, is love—human love! and then the thought darted like lightning through my mind, that she,—the gloriously

lovely—the maiden Francesca, loved me—me, a priest—a vowed servant of God ! In a moment a pang, like a sharp sword, passed through me,—the intoxicating vision fled from me,—I had, unknowing whither my mad steps were leading me, reached an unfrequented spot beyond the Alhambra, and above the valley of the Daro. I threw myself upon the earth, in an agony of despair. I wept, and prayed by turns,—earthly passion, and divine recollections, maintained a fearful conflict,—sometimes I called aloud upon Francesca, coupling with her name all of tenderness that human lips may utter ; then I called upon heaven not to abandon me ; and tears and sighs of contrition were strangely mingled with the outpourings of human love and despair. At this moment, the vesper bell of a neighbouring convent struck upon my ear : it was like the accusing voice of God. I remembered the hour and its invitation ; and while I prayed, the calm-

ness of former days stole upon my mind. I was already on the road to that secluded temple, where I had so often asked the protection of the patron saint. ‘I have been led here,’ I said, ‘by the Divine will, let me not turn away;’ and with hasty steps I pressed onward, and sought the portal of the chapel dedicated to St. Teresa.

“ Oh, I remember that moment ! Before entering the porch, I cast my eyes up to heaven—a calm twilight filled the air; the sun had set, but a deep glow spread over the west, which yet cast a golden lustre upon the painted windows; the broad moon had risen—and it seemed as if the great eye of God were upon me. I softly entered the church, and noiselessly approached the sacred niche. Ah! with what malignant subtilty had the evil one spread his snare!—not content with luring me from my vows, he had bribed me to my destruction, even in the very

temple of God. A figure knelt before the altar, with clasped hands—a female figure,—and I heard these words earnestly pronounced:—
‘Shield me, oh good and glorified saint! thou whose life upon earth was sanctity and purity, and whose work in heaven is the blessed work of protection and intercession for frail, but repentant mortals,—oh shield me from my sinful thoughts! thou knowest them, blessed saint! and thou knowest, that without thy aid they will destroy my soul.’ Great God! it was the voice of Francesca: the holy calm that an instant before had filled my breast, passed away; passion again flooded the avenues to my heart: the place, the prayer of penitence, that yet echoed in the distant aisles—my resolves—heaven—my soul, were forgotten! and with burning accents of love on my lips, I sprung forward to prostrate myself, not before the altar of Teresa the saint, but at the feet of Francesca the mortal. She

turned, uttered a faint scream, rose, and fell into my arms. I but remember that moment of delirium,—I clasped her to my breast, and sunk fainting to the ground, overpowered with excess of bliss.

“When I opened my eyes, my head was supported by Francesca,—I yet laid below the altar, and she kneeled beside me: the twilight had not yet left the niche; her veil was thrown back, and her eyes, swimming and beseeching, were intently fixed upon me. After a pause of a few moments, she said in a voice tremulous with emotion: ‘Father, why camest thou hither? why were my devotions interrupted, perhaps overheard?’ The delirium in which I had sunk to insensibility, had passed away; but the calm that succeeded, was not that holy calm with which my heart was filled when I entered the temple, but that which denotes a settled purpose, whether in good or evil; because to return is

impossible,—as he who passing a raging torrent, looks back, and seeing the props of his footsteps swept away, prepares to advance, even if to destruction. I looked back, and knew that my vows were already broken; the sanctity of my character tarnished, heaven forgotten, and my soul lost: I had profaned the temple of God, and outraged the sacredness of the altar—the shrine of St. Teresa had been polluted—for had I not, even on the spot worn by the knees of the devout, and where no accents save those of penitence and devotion had ever been breathed, had I not,—I, a priest—the dedicated to the church—the dead to the world and its allurements,—had I not, even there, been the willing servant of sin—the slave of unhallowed passion!! the lips that should have poured out prayer, had trembled with the outpourings of human love; the arms that should have been lifted in devotion, had stooped to embrace a mortal!! These

recollections passed like lightning through my mind, and scarcely had Francesca said, ‘Father why camest thou hither?’ ere I was ready to reply, ‘Francesca, I came not to disturb thy devotions, or to listen to them; though I know thy secret thoughts, and overheard thy prayers. I came with purpose alike holy as thine, to implore the assistance of the patron saint in delivering me from sinful thoughts, and, as I once thought, unhallowed hopes; but now this purpose is vain: my thoughts shall no more be sinful, nor my hopes unhallowed, they both shall be lawful—hear me, Francesca,—but first let us leave this altar, the sanctity of the place disturbs thee. Francesca,’ I continued, when we stood beneath the starry sky, ‘the church claimed my services ere I knew the world from which it separated me—ere I knew that it contained such as thee. God will not accept a divided service; he who is dedicated to heaven, must not glance

regretfully towards earth, his soul is the forfeit; and she who is not denied the enjoyments that earth affords, must not dream of a servant of heaven partaking them with her—her soul is else the forfeit. Francesca, there is but one escape from perdition for both thee and me; one only way by which our thoughts shall no longer be sinful, nor our hopes unholy; one only refuge from the wiles of satan: I will renounce the priesthood. Nay, start not, Francesca; why did I seek the shrine of St. Teresa? was it not to ask deliverance from the thoughts that wandered towards thee! and why were these sinful, but because I was a priest, and thou a woman? but when I am no longer a priest! Dost thou understand me, Francesca?’

“ Francesca tremblingly answered, ‘yes,—when thou art no longer a priest, we may love.’ ”

“ ‘ Here then,’ said I, ‘ beneath the starry sky, and these thousand witnesses,—and here,’ ”

leading her again into the temple, ‘I renounce my vows—religion itself demands the renunciation. And now, most loved Francesca, forget that thou hast ever known me as one of the priesthood; our love is no more sinful, and our union will be holy.’

“After a few moments of silence and rapture, Francesca disengaged herself from my passionate embrace. ‘In yonder house,’ said she, ‘my attendants are waiting my return. It was our confessor, the Carthusian friar, who sent me to the shrine of St. Teresa. Alas! how shall I again meet him in confession?’ ‘Thou never shalt,’ said I, ‘we must soon be far from Granada:’ and thus Francesca left me.

“A strange perturbation filled me when I recalled the events of the past hour. I knew that in renouncing the service of God—even were the renunciation possible—and in forgetting my vows that I might gratify human passion,—I was

destroying my soul; I had voluntarily made choice of the allurements of earth, and thrown from me the promises and engagements of heaven: but I did not regret the choice; the intoxicating draught of love, that I had newly drunk, circulated like fire in my veins—I had clasped my adored to my bosom—nay, had I not tasted the first kiss of love!—if I had possessed a thousand souls, I would have sacrificed them all; if heaven had at that moment opened to admit me, I would have shrunk back from its gates. ‘She is mine—she is mine!’ I said, ‘and we shall be united;’ and it was almost in a frenzy of joy and hope, that I took the road to Granada.

“At times however, there darted upon my mind the conviction, that I had deceived Francesca, and that I was leading to perdition that soul I had pretended I would save. She, in the innocence of her youth, and ignorant of the nature of those obligations that bind the priest-

hood, believed that I might abjure it,—she believed that I possessed the power of releasing myself from the obligation of those vows which I had voluntarily taken; and to this deception it was, that I was alone indebted for the compliance of that innocent maiden. Had she suspected the truth, I knew that she would have shrunk from my unhallowed touch, shuddered at the impiety of my confession, and would have for ever fled from the presence of a polluted servant of the church. I knew the deception that passion had urged me to practise; I knew that the service of God could not be so shaken off—that once admitted into the priesthood, death alone can dissolve the union; that the vows which separate from the world, the vow especially of celibacy, are for ever binding; I also knew the consequences of a violation of those vows, and of desertion from the church,—not only in another, but in this world; and that penalties the most

frightful,* waited upon the apostacy of the church's servants. I knew all this: my guilt, my probable punishment in this world, my certain doom hereafter; but all this was ineffectual to turn me from the path that lay as if through the portals of a terrestrial paradise that was opening before me. I felt that I was *already* lost to heaven; that holy thoughts had fled from me for ever; that the Eden I had pictured on earth was more prized than the joys promised in Paradise; and would not the wrath of God as surely overtake the hypocrite as the open sinner! Thus did I strengthen myself in my resolution; and casting from me all doubts and fears, and closing behind me, as it were, the door of repentance, I resigned myself to the full enjoyment of the new and tumultuous feelings that revelled within me—the luxury of burning recollections, and ecstatic hopes.

* The Inquisition no doubt existed at that time.

“ On the morning succeeding the eventful night that beheld my apostacy, the Carthusian friar—the confessor in the intendant’s family, was found dead in his cell: he doubtless passed into that paradise where I might once have hoped to be. This event rendered it necessary that another confessor should be appointed to the family of the Conde de Peñuoz; and, so high did my character stand in his estimation, that I was the same day promoted to the situation held by the Carthusian friar.

“ The event that called that excellent man from a life of privations and austerities, to the unfading reward of his piety, could scarcely be regretted; and the office, which in consequence devolved upon me, I could not but regard as having become mine at a seasonable moment,—since, by its privileges, I had access to the ear of Francesca, and opportunity, therefore, to effect the design I had irrevocably formed.

“ Why should I wound holy ears by details of my infatuation and apostacy? why, when the grave is opening before me, should I speak of things—the recollection of which darkens my view beyond it? It is enough to say, that I persevered in my design, and was every hour strengthened in my apostacy. My unhallowed love grew with the opportunities I now so often found of inflaming it; and the consciousness that I sacrilegiously abused the privileges of my ghostly office, and prostituted the sanctity of the confessional to my unholy views, fixed me more irrevocably in the entanglements of sin, and seemed to rear a wall of fire between me and repentance.

“ Meanwhile, impelled chiefly by my passion, and, in some degree, by the dread of discovery, I urged Francesca to fly with me. She, as fearful of discovery,—shrinking from the hypocrisy which I was still obliged to practise; and

invited by the pleadings of her own heart, did not long resist. Alas! Francesca! years of suffering, and a roving and licentious life, blotted the remembrance of thee from my memory; but now I see thee as on that fatal night, when youthful and lovely, pale, and trembling, the tears dimming thy coal-black eyes; but with love in thy heart, thou gavest thyself into my keeping, and sealed the doom of *my* soul,—yet—not of thine,—oh, *Jesus Maria*, not of thine! penance surely atoned thy crime.

I, who knew little of the world, provided ill against discovery. At Salubrena, a small village on the sea-coast, scarcely ten leagues from Granada, I fancied that we should be safe from pursuit. Before reaching this place, I threw away the external tokens of the priesthood; and soon after my arrival there, that ceremony was performed which I knew to be a mummary; but which my confiding Francesca believed to

be the sanctification of her love. Would, holy father, I could banish for ever from my memory the recollection of these days ; alas ! how can I ask thy absolution ; for when my lips would say, ‘ Grant, O God, that I may remember the number and enormity of my sins,—that I may detest and confess them,’ my heart refuses to say, amen. But short-lived was the enjoyment of this paradise. Scarcely had one short month, purchased at the cost of my soul, passed away, ere I was torn from the arms of the weeping and deceived Francesca, by the officials of the holy office. We were separated : I, led to that punishment I deserved,—she, to that penance which, I trust, reconciled her to the church. We were separated,—and I never saw her more. Merciful God ; Holy Mother of the Redeemer ; forgive the tears that yet belong to human memories, and change them into tears of compunction ! !

“ The punishment of my sin belongs not to the duty of confession ; but this I have to avow : my heart grew harder under its severity,—harder towards God,—and yearned after the world, and all that it had once offered. I escaped from my persecutors ; and wandered throughout Spain,—if perchance I might discover the retreat of my Francesca. I visited Granada in the disguise of a mendicant ; there, her story had not been forgotten ; and it was known that in one of the convents of Murcia she was expiating her errors. Thither, I accordingly hastened ; and in the *Convento de las Capuchinas*, I found,—not Francesca, alas !—but the recollection of her penances, her patience, and her piety. These she had shown and suffered ; and, dropping some tears upon her grave—tears, not all of sorrow ; consoled by the assurance of the sisters, that she had found rest in heaven,—I passed on my way.

“I was now alone in the world, and wandered I knew not, nor cared whither. At length, one evening I found myself upon the shore of the Mediterranean, but whether upon the coast of Murcia, or Valencia, I was ignorant. I was hungry and cheerless,—careless of life, and yet fearful of dying. While sitting among the loose sand and sea-weeds, satisfying my hunger with a few ilex-nuts—my mind alternating between the dread of death and the weariness of living,—a small *scampavia*, much used in those parts, came suddenly round a headland, followed by a somewhat larger boat, a *settee*. In the former boat were two men—in the latter were three. The *scampavia* ran ashore, close to where I sat: ‘help us,’ said they, ‘to defend our lives and property against these pirates and smugglers,—we shall be three to three.’ They placed a pistol and a cutlass in my hand, and I mechanically rose, and accompanied them to the water-

edge, to oppose the landing of their pursuers. The moment the settee touched the shore, the three men leaped upon the sand, and at the same instant, both parties fired their pistols; one of the pirates fell, as did also one of my comrades; the remaining two pirates closed upon us, and instantly cut down my companion; I defended myself as I best could: ‘Do not kill him,’ said one of the men,—you see Nicholas is dead: St. Anthony of Padua preserve us! how can we keep afloat with but two of a crew?’ It would have proved useless to oppose the intentions of the victorious pirates, as my life seemed to be spared only on condition of my supplying the place of Nicholas. I could only allege my ignorance of a seafaring life; but this, as you may easily suppose, was overruled, and I found myself one of a crew of pirates. The contents of the scampavia were transferred to the settee;

and a hole being scooped in the sand, the two unfortunate men were huddled into it.

“ My time upon earth is now too short to allow an enumeration of the crimes in which, if I have not been a direct actor, I have been at least an indifferent spectator. The perils and excitement of the life which I now led, weakened, and at length almost obliterated, the recollection of the scarcely less guilty life that had preceded it. I was not, indeed, altogether such as my companions: I would have avoided the spilling of blood; they looked upon it as matter of indifference;—I might, perhaps, have listened to a prayer for mercy; their hearts were utterly closed against the accents of pity;—but in lawlessness of purpose, and boldness in the execution of it—in carelessness of injury inflicted, even of the sacrifice of human life, if our escape from danger or discovery called for the sacrifice,—and in the indulgence of a licentious and

lawless life, I equalled, nay, surpassed my comrades. At times, when on the night watch—when peril was at a distance—and when I was alone with the stars, softer thoughts would steal upon me; and I would think that I grieved the glorified spirit of Francesca, by the sinful life I was leading; and a half-formed prayer would expire upon my lips, as the voice of one of my comrades broke in upon my meditation; or as a sudden pitch of the vessel, or the sound of breakers, recalled me to my duty. My comrades taunted me with irreverence, because I sometimes refused to join in those morning and evening prayers, which they never failed to remember; but I felt that this mockery would be an aggravation of my wickedness; and I refrained.

“ Father, my confession draws to an end.—Obliged to forsake the trade of piracy on the eastern coast of Spain, from being at length too

well known to continue it with impunity, we passed towards the south; sometimes venturing through the straits into the Atlantic, and changing the profession of pirates for that of smugglers, which we carried on between the free port of Gibraltar and the southern coasts of Spain. If in this calling, there has been less bloodshed, there has been more licentiousness, — if less cruelty, there has been less temptation to be cruel. One only recollection affords me comfort; it is, that I have been the means of saving the life of the holy man who has tended me in my illness, and who (blessed be God!) has preserved me to receive thy ghostly aid.”

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM WHICH SOME KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD MAY BE
ACQUIRED; AND WHEREIN MY GOOD OPINION OF MAN-
KIND BRINGS MY GOLD INTO JEOPARDY.

“AMEN!” said I, as I concluded the last sentence; “blessed be God, indeed, that my life was saved,—and if my aid has helped thee to the confessor, and through him to Heaven, ’t is no more than thou deservest for thy good intentions towards me: may thy soul rest in peace! There’s nothing bad that might not have been worse; Paulo might have lived long enough before he found another heir willing to pay for a hundred masses.”

There being now nothing farther to detain

me in Malaga, and thinking there might, perhaps, be wisdom in withdrawing for a season from the neighbourhood of Andalusia, I cast my eyes around for a vessel bound to some distant port. I was now possessed of no less a sum than one hundred and sixty thousand reals, in hard cash,—and having concluded a bargain with a Barbary Jew, by which the casket of jewels and the diamond ring were transferred to him for forty thousand more, I resolved upon seeing the world in the capacity of a traveller, who possesses the means of enjoying himself. Sometimes, as from the heights above Malaga, I looked towards the sierra, beyond which lay Andalusia, and remembered that in that province, and at no great distance, lay Penaflor, my native town, I was almost tempted to relinquish my design of further exploring the world,—and to go and see if my father yet lived, and if Frederica were yet married: at other times, my thoughts wan-

dered towards Isabel and Valenzuela : but I was yet too young to settle in the world ; and fortune or my own wit, or a happy alliance of both, having hitherto so agreeably helped me on, though now and then at a halting pace, I resolved still for a little longer to trust to the alliance.

It was not long before I fell in with the master of a vessel bound for Alicante ; in which I hired a passage,—but the cargo of *bucaros** not being completed, two or three weeks were yet at my disposal. It was no difficult matter to

* In the neighbourhood of the convent of Victoria, near Malaga, the country people find that useful clay of which they make the vessels called *bucaros*, used for cooling water. Without these, the inhabitant of these sultry shores would be deprived of one of his most essential luxuries ; for when the hot winds prevail, water exposed to the air in these vessels, becomes icy cold. This singular fact is to be explained by the porous nature of the vessels, which allows the water to exude ; and the hot wind blowing upon the moist external surface, a rapid evaporation, and consequent cold, are produced.

divert myself for a few days with the roguery of the most roguish population in Spain; and more than once, I had an opportunity of observing the wonderful dexterity with which the natives of that town use the Guadix knife, whether in cutting up a melon, or ripping up a companion. But this occupation soon became wearisome; “Malaga,” the elixir vitæ of my poor preceptor, became insipid; and even “Lagrimas” I discovered to be too luscious. “It would be inexcusable,” said I to myself, “in a Caballero like me, to loiter away the next fourteen days on the alameda of Malaga; the ancient and famous city of Granada lies but at three days’ journey from hence; no doubt Granada boasts an alameda as well as Malaga, and has as bright eyes to grace it.” And without farther hesitation, I resolved to judge for myself in these matters. Knowing, however, the bad reputation of the road, and rating at too

high a price, the troubles, dangers, and good fortune which had united to fill my purse, to incline me to run any risk of losing it, I determined upon leaving my riches in some sure hands until my return; having accordingly made inquiry as to the most honest and substantial merchant of the place, I consigned my gold to his charge, receiving at the same time, a written acknowledgment of the deposit. "Doubtless," said Don Tomas Lamo (for such was the name of the merchant), "you have provided against the chances of the road."

"In the surest of all ways," said I, "by leaving my gold in your keeping."

"Ay, ay," returned the merchant, "so far well; but you carry some valuables no doubt—a Caballero such as you, will scarcely journey with an empty purse to Granada, where, like other places, gold purchases pleasure; and even this little paper I have just delivered to you has its value."

“Surely,” said I, “a man of your reputation would not take advantage of —”

“Ah, God forbid,” interrupted the merchant, “but I could not answer for my heirs; I have enemies in this city of rogues, as every honest man has; and it is possible—mark me, it is just possible, that the hand of some villain might make my probity of little use to you.”

“I understand you,” replied I, “and am willing to be guided by your knowledge.”

“It is not by force, but by address,” rejoined the merchant, “that dangers are to be avoided. I have in my service, a fellow of extraordinary honesty, who has travelled oftener between this city and Granada than there are saints days in the year,—he knows a rogue from an honest man, and a thieves’ den from a decent venta—no easy matter, believe me, in these parts: with this man, your gold would be as safe in your girdle as in my coffers, only that the weight

would be burdensome : you are welcome to his company, if so be that you think well of my advice."

The merchant's talk was reasonable; and thinking the fellow might earn his puchero in my service, in many other ways than by his mere honesty, which, though a useful, is but a negative quality in a servant—I thanked the merchant for his offer; and early the following morning, was ascending the steep mountains that lie behind Malaga, followed, a few paces behind, by the paragon of honesty who had been recommended to me.

"Friend," said I, making a sign for him to come alongside of me, "they tell me this is an ugly road for honest men to travel with gold in their girdles."

"Oh, a villanous road," replied Miguel, for such was his name; "look señor at the crosses by the way side, scarcely a man has passed us,

since leaving Malaga, who is n't a rogue; 't is a useful knack I possess, in distinguishing a thief from an honest man."

"'T is on account of that quality," said I, "that thy master lent me thy services; thou hast doubtless been often similarly employed."

"Your highness may say that," replied Miguel; "many 's the purse I 've saved, and many the reward I 've gotten for my services."

"'T was more, however," said I, "out of civility to thy master, the worthy merchant who took charge of my gold, than from any fear on my own account, that I accepted thy company."

"Nevertheless," returned Miguel, "my master enjoined me to look well to your highness' safety;—for 'harkee, Miguel,' said he, 'thou knowest the spite my heir has conceived against me; and should any thing happen to me before thy return, 't would be a sad thought in my last hours, that the gold of so worthy a Caballero

should pass into the coffers of my graceless heir; who would, no doubt, refuse to deliver it up, if the paper which I have given to the owner should be stolen from his girdle;’ where, please your highness, my master supposed you would take care to secrete it.”

“No doubt,” said I, “such a loss would be a serious misfortune; but I trust we may find thy considerate master alive and well when we return to Malaga.”

“God grant it,—the Holy Virgin grant it,” said Miguel; and so discoursing, we wound up the heights, and at length began to descend into the valleys on the other side. Notwithstanding the experience I had had of the world, and the price I had sometimes paid for it; and the perusal of my preceptor’s history; and all the advantages I had derived from his lessons—I never for a moment suspected the honesty of my attendant; and, if possible, still less, the

probity of the substantial merchant whom I had intrusted with my gold. The faithful Miguel slept each night near the mattress of his temporary master, with the safety of whose purse he was intrusted; and without any adventure in which the skill of my servant was put to the test, we found ourselves journeying through the vega of Granada; and soon after, we entered this sumptuous city, which seemed to me a city of palaces; and more worthy of renown than even that other boast of Spain, of which the saying is—

QUIEN NO HA VISTO SEVIGLIA
NO HA VISTO MARAVIGLIA.

“Miguel,” said I, as we halted in the market-place of Granada, at the gate of the *Posada de la Santisima Trinidad*, “thou may’st amuse thyself to thy liking, till I have occasion for thy company back to Malaga; here I shall be able to take care of my purse myself.”

“Nevertheless, señor,” replied Miguel, “your highness overrates the honesty of the people of this city; and although during the day my services may be spared, yet the injunction of my master forces me to beg permission to sleep in the same quarto with your highness.”

“Be it so, Miguel,” said I; and he, taking charge of the horses, left me to find my way into the posada.

“My house is so full of company,” said the innkeeper, “that I must pray you to spread your mattresses in the same quarto in which three Caballeros are already asleep: honest gentlemen they are; arrived in this city yesterday from foreign parts.” Supper being quickly despatched, this was accordingly done. The two Caballeros slept too soundly to be disturbed by so trifling a noise as the spreading of a mattress; and I, for my own part, speedily followed so excellent an example.

Long before day-light, I was awoke by the voices of the strangers; and overheard the following dialogue.

“No doubt,” said one of the strangers, “he will arrive before night.”

“It is an excellent plot,” said one voice, “and he’ll be more lucky than wise, if Señor Don Pedro, as I think he is called, ever sees his doubloons again;—it will be our fault and Miguel’s.”

I need scarcely say, that my own name and Miguel’s, and the mention of gold, sufficiently roused me; and raising my head cautiously from my pillow, I listened to the sequel of the dialogue in breathless anxiety.

“It is more than likely,” said the other of the strangers, “that Miguel has already saved us all trouble: he’s a clever rogue; and my name is not Pascual, if he has not before this transferred the writing from the Caballero’s girdle to his own.”

“In which case,” returned the former, “we have only to get it from Miguel, and carry it back to Malaga.”

“And that,” said the other, “will be vastly easier than waylaying the Caballero on his return, and making ourselves masters of it; for I confess I do not greatly like the look of that monstrous sabre he is said to carry under his cloak.”

“Make yourself easy as to that,” said the first speaker; “Miguel knows his business better than to leave us any thing else to do than carry the evidence of his faithfulness back to Malaga; where I am to personate the heir of the murdered Don Tomas Lamo, who will all the while be listening in the ante-chamber to the railings of the poor tricked Caballero.”

“*Jesus!*” returned the other, ’t will be better than a comedy of Lopez, to see the face of the Caballero, when he learns that Don Tomas is

dead and buried; and discovers that his writing is gone, and his gold in the heir's coffers;—he'll rave lustily, I'll warrant."

"Ay, ay," said the former, "no doubt he'll rave; but that will not get back his gold: there's not an escrivano in Malaga who won't swear he attended Don Tomas' burial, and saw him nailed up and walled in."

"All's quiet in the posada now," said the first speaker; "these cursed muleteers and mules setting off, woke us both,—they're gone now; and there are yet, at least, two good hours to day-light, which are better spent in sleeping than talking, so *buenas noches*."

"*Buenas noches*," returned the other; and while I continued to listen, I heard audible demonstration of sleep having overtaken the two Caballeros.

During the foregoing dialogue, I had every moment expected some interruption from Mi-

guel, whose interest it would have been, by a speedy discovery of himself, to have prevented me from overhearing a conversation that so nearly concerned me; but all continuing quiet during the dialogue, which was permitted to terminate in the manner above related, I naturally concluded that Miguel had continued to sleep notwithstanding the noise; and I congratulated myself accordingly upon having been so opportunely put in possession of secrets of such importance. No sooner therefore was I satisfied that the two Caballeros slept, than I hastened to execute the resolution I had already taken; blessing the lucky fortune that had led me to this posada, and introduced me into the quarto of the strangers.

My first care was, cautiously to unloose my girdle, and convince myself that the paper was still in my possession. It was gone! Miguel had already executed his part of the plot.

“ Well,” said I, within myself, “ it is fortunately yet within my reach ; the villain sleeps an arm’s length from me ; if he awake and resist me—by all the saints, ’t will be a race between him and the other two Caballeros, which of them will be first in purgatory ; and grasping my sabre with one hand, I crept to the mattress of Miguel, that I might possess myself of his girdle, and thereby recover the title deed to my gold. The mattress was empty ; the villain had doubtless that very night accomplished his purpose, and was flown ; but whether to Malaga, or only, which was more likely, in quest of the two rogues who at the very time were sleeping a few yards from him, I had no means of ascertaining ; the latter supposition was so much more probable, from the conversation I had heard, that I resolved to act upon it.

To attempt the recovery of the writing would be vain ; for how could I hope to discover the

retreat of Miguel, in a city to which I was a stranger; I knew however, that I had the start of the villains; and trusting to expedition, and to my knowledge of Don Tomas' plot, and my unexpected return, I moved cautiously to the door of the chamber—not without hesitating a moment, whether I would execute justice upon the hired ruffians who still slept soundly; but perceiving no advantage from this course, I stepped into the kitchen, and taking down one of the lamps, made my way to the lower end, where I found my horse standing beside that of Miguel's; and without demanding of the posadero the price of his lodging, I was soon mounted upon one horse, and leading the other through the streets of Granada; and before day-break I had made four good leagues across the vega. “'Tis but a short visit I have made to Granada,” said I, looking back upon the city which was gilded by the rays of the morning sun; “but

it is better to lose sight of Granada than of my gold."

As I hastened on my journey, I could not but curse my imprudence in having trusted my gold, for which I had suffered so much, with any inhabitant of a city so noted for its rogues as Malaga. "Was it for this," said I, "that I revenged myself on Andrades—and personated a ghost, and fought with a crew of pirates—to be after all duped by my own simplicity?" and still urging on my horse, I travelled till nightfall; and after a short respite, again before day-break proceeded towards Malaga.

It was near sunset on the evening of the second day, that having reached the highest ridge of the mountains that overlook Malaga, I was riding leisurely forward, as indeed I had done for some hours' before, when I heard the distant clatter of horses' hoofs behind me. Drawing in my horse, upon the rising ground which I chanced just

then to have reached, I perceive three horsemen, riding at a furious pace; and I had no hesitation in concluding, that these were no others than the Caballeros whom I had left asleep, and my faithful servant Miguel; doubtless making what expedition they could, to apprise Don Tomas of the events that had taken place, and for any thing I knew to the contrary, to take the most effectual means of doing this, by methods not uncommon in such a neighbourhood. I feel it to be unnecessary for me, after the events that have been already recorded, to make any apology for declining to measure swords with the ruffians who approached; if one would escape, I would be nothing the better of sending the other two straight to the devil; so vaulting on the horse which I led by the bridle, and leaving the other at liberty, I dashed forward down the steep; and although, at the different angles of the zig-zag road that descends to

Malaga, I caught a glimpse of a horseman far above, the distance every moment increased, and when I reached the foot of the hill, and drew up to listen, I was unable to catch any sound of pursuit.

It was already almost dark when I entered the streets of Malaga; and urging my horse forward, I stopped at the gate of Don Tomas. "My name," said I to the porter who appeared, "is Pascual;" I come straight from Granada, and would instantly be introduced to Don Tomas."

"Ah, my good Pascual," said Don Tomas, as I entered the chamber where he sat, taking his evening refresco of chocolate; "thou bringest welcome tidings no doubt; thou hast it safe?" but scarcely had he concluded his salutation, when raising his eyes, and perceiving who it was that stood before him, "Jesus Maria!" said he in evident perturbation; but instantly recovering himself, "Ah señor Don Pedro,—forgive my surprise,—your return is unexpected."

“Most unexpected,” said I, “else I should doubtless have found Don Tomas in his grave; but I am here, as you see, to claim my gold, which I perceive has fortunately not yet passed into the coffers of the graceless heir, who would have refused to deliver it to me.”

I have little doubt that Don Tomas, with the instinct which rogues naturally have, accounted correctly in his own mind, for my sudden and unexpected appearance; for I had no sooner made my claim, than he replied, “surely, señor Don Pedro, the gold which you intrusted to me, is at your disposal; that is, upon delivery of the writing which is evidence against me.”

I saw no necessity for standing upon niceties with a villain like Don Tomas. He could only suspect, but could not feel any assurance, that the paper which he demanded was not in my possession. By at once confessing the truth, I should have given to him the advantage which

every rogue possesses over an honest man : there was no witness to the acknowledgment he had just made ; and he would in all probability have denied all knowledge either of myself or my doubloons ; and there was besides little time for disputation, as the arrival of Miguel, who was no doubt at that moment riding with his companions at full speed towards Malaga, would at once deprive me of my advantage. Beginning therefore to untie the knot at the end of my girdle, as if for the purpose of producing the writing, I replied, “ Señor Don Tomas, at the same time that you deliver my gold, I will return to you the evidence of your possessing it,—a merchant of your extensive experience must admit this to be regular,—please to count out my doubloons, and the business shall be settled regularly ; you shall have a reasonable consideration for the safe custody of the money.”

The merchant, knowing that I in reality pos-

sessed the writing, had no means of resisting my claim, and probably half believing from the coolness of my address, that I had in fact escaped the toils he had laid for me, produced the bag which I had delivered to him, and emptying the gold upon the table, began to reckon it over piece by piece, as if he would delay till the last moment, the pain of a separation,—but I had reasons for expedition. “Señor Don Tomas,” said I; at the same time sweeping the gold from the table into the bag; “I have no doubt the sum is correct.”

“Hold, hold,” interrupted the merchant, and attempting to arrest the progress of the gold—“the quittance, the writing.”

“A quittance you shall have,” said I “when I have deposited the doubloons in my girdle.”

The suspicions of the merchant had now returned; “no, no,” said he, “show me, if you will not yet give up, the writing I delivered

into your hands; till then, the gold remains here.'

"Señor Don Tomas Lamo," said I, "I know the full extent of your villany; your honest Miguel performed his part to admiration, by stealthily depriving me of the evidence you require."

"Ah, ah! then," interrupted the merchant, with an expression of joy in his face, "it is as I suspected. I must have evidence, Señor Don Pedro,—without my writing, I cannot part with this gold."

"Villain!" said I, "you admit that these doubloons are mine, and you know that your own servant robbed me of the writing which you gave to me, and yet you refuse to deliver to me my own."

"Gently," said the merchant: "this is an affair of business; entirely an affair of business; you place a quantity of gold in my custody, and

I give you a written acknowledgment that I have received it; what evidence have I that you have been robbed?—so long as the writing is not returned to me, I may be called upon to refund the money. Come, come, Señor Don Pedro, listen to reason: I might keep every one of these doubloons; but I will be generous: it will be your wisest part to enter into an arrangement with me, for you must be sensible that you have no means of proving your title,—no witnesses, Señor.”

“Nevertheless, Señor Don Tomas,” said I, “if I have no means of proving my title, I have a means of enforcing it, which is much the same thing; and I have also a witness at hand, whose evidence is irresistible.”

“How! a witness,” said Don Tomas in alarm.

“Harkee, Don Tomas,” said I, “do not imagine that the quirks of an old rogue will

avail with me. This is my witness," unsheathing my sabre, "and I desire no better: 't is a willing and a practised witness; and the evidence it gives is conclusive, for it ends all disputes;—so, Don Tomas, recommend thy soul to heaven; thou wilt have no occasion to feign death now, and thy burial will be a real, and not a mock burial: as for thy worldly wealth, 't will be all needed to pray thy soul half out of purgatory."

As I made this address with the air of a man who seemed resolved to carry his purpose into effect—and to say the truth, I was greatly tempted to confer a lasting benefit upon society—Don Tomas seemed more dead than alive. To preserve the gold, was now the least of his thoughts; he no doubt imagined his last hour was come: for knowing well, that but a small portion of my wealth would buy indemnity for

his blood,* he naturally supposed that my desire of vengeance might be thought worth such a sacrifice. For my part, my threat had answered all the purpose I had intended; and my measures being somewhat hastened by the approaching noise of horses' feet, I swept the whole of the doubloons into the bag, and hastily inclosing it in the folds of my girdle, and flourishing my weapon within an inch of the merchant's neck, I left him to recover as he might from his alarm, and descended into the street with all possible expedition.

* Nothing could have been easier than for Pedro to have carried his threat into execution, such events are of every-day occurrence in southern Spain even at this day. The following is an example: "One day last winter, two butchers quarrelled in the market-place of Malaga, and got to high words; and one of them, according to the usual practice in such cases, put his hand under his girdle, and half drew forth his knife. All the while, an *escrivano* (lawyer) of known talent in his profession, a man who never allowed any one who confided in him to be either tried or executed, stood by. While the man but still half

Just as I passed out of the gate, the three horsemen had drawn bridle. "Good evening, Señores," said I; "you are but a moment too late for the admirable comedy that has just been acted;" and at the same time vaulting on the horse, which upon my arrival I had led into the court-yard, I left the trio to the task of consoling their employer, and condoling with one another,—and made the best of my way to the posada.

'T was with no unpleasant sensation that I dipped my knife in the estofado that evening:

showed his knife, as if uncertain whether to use it or no, the escrivano continued to jog him on the elbow. '*Da le*,' (give it him), said the lawyer; '*aquí estoy yo?*' (don't you see that I am here, so that no harm can come to you?) The butcher however had not been sufficiently roused, for he put up his knife; and the escrivano, turning to him with a look of contempt, said, '*Alma miserable!*' (mean spirited creature!) 'and so for the sake of four or five hundred reals, you would not revenge yourself upon your enemy.'" This remarkable fact I had from the lips of an eye-witness, a highly respectable American merchant of Malaga.—*Spain in 1830.*

“a man,” said I, “requires his wits about him to keep his gold, as well as to get it,—’t is the more difficult art of the two: an inheritance will sometimes fall to a man unexpectedly,—but it depends upon himself whether it stays with him.” It still wanted four days of the time appointed for the departure of the vessel to Alicante; and having had already some experience of the roguery of the city, I never stirred but in day-light,—left the Señoras to be serenaded by other Caballeros than me,—and contented myself with morning prayer, leaving vespers to be attended by greater devotees or greater sinners,—and thus the remainder of my time in Malaga* expired.

* Malaga is noted for its idle and bad population. The *mala gente* (bad people) of Malaga, is a common expression when speaking of the population of this city.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTAINING THE FIRST PART OF THE ENTERTAINING STORY
OF GASTON DE PEDRALBA, THE ONE-EYED.

WHILE hurrying to the harbour as fast as the weight of my gold and my baggage would permit, and which was indeed so considerable, that I was every now and then forced to stop before reaching the quay, I was accosted by a young man with but one eye, who implored me, for the love of God, to allow him to carry a part of my burden, that he might earn a few quartos. Being fatigued with the weight I carried, and liking the countenance of the speaker, although he had but one eye; I tossed into his arms the leathern trunk in which my cloak, and a few other articles

were contained, and walking along with him, inquired how he happened to be in want of a quarto. "Ah!" said he, pointing to his eye, "'t is the loss of this that has ruined me."

"Why," said I, in return, "I cannot very well understand how that may be,—one eye is enough for a man to earn his puchero,—and though the loss of an eye be a misfortune to any man, it is difficult to perceive how it should prove his ruin."

"It has nevertheless proved so in my case," replied he; "but there is no time left to explain how,—for if I mistake not, we have already reached the vessel in which you are about to sail—see,—they are even now unfastening the moorings."

There was something, I say, pleasing in the countenance of the young man: his form was fine and athletic; his manner of address gentle and agreeable; and so expressive was the eye

that remained, that if he had had its fellow, I question whether jealousy might have permitted me to make the proposal which is contained in the next sentence.

“Harkee, young man,” said I, “you seem willing to work for your wages,—’t is perhaps the same thing to you whether you work at sea or on land, or in one town or another : if you ’re agreed to step on board with me, you shall have two double doubloons, and fare well, till I put you ashore at Alicante.”

“At Alicante !” repeated the young man in an agitated voice, the reason of which will become known by and by—“to Alicante be it then, and God bless you for the offer ;” and thus I was provided with a servant. I must confess, that curiosity to know how the loss of an eye could be the ruin of a man, was as powerful a motive with me to engage his services, as either compassion for his condition, or my own necessities.

Before doubling Cape de Gata, I had found some occasion for the services of an attendant, who, as it will afterwards be seen, had too much experience of the sea, to be incommoded by the white swell against which we were forced to beat all the way from Malaga; but having once rounded this cape, we ran directly for Carthagera, in which port we cast anchor on the fourth day. Here, although our stay was short, I did not forget the new character under which I travelled; and in that character, contrived to get quit of some few of my pieces. I was equally charmed with the Carthagenera women, and the Balsapintada wine; weakness being the characteristic of the one, and strength of the other.

From Carthagenera, we ran with a fair wind for Cape de Palos, which, having doubled, we made sail direct for Alicante, stealing along the beautiful shore of Valencia: and one delightful

evening, while seated upon deck, and while Gaston de Pedralba (for such was the name of my attendant) stood opposite, leaning upon the side of the vessel, I expressed a desire to have some explanation of that enigma spoken by him on the quay of Malaga, that the loss of his eye had proved his ruin; and he, well disposed to gratify my curiosity, which he was doubtless surprised had not long before prompted the request, seated himself beside me upon the locker, and spoke as follows :

THE STORY OF GASTON DE PEDRALBA;

AND HOW THE LOSS OF ONE EYE, WAS THE CAUSE OF
HIS RUIN.

“WHEN on the quay at Malaga, you gave me to understand that this vessel was bound for Alicante, the emotion with which I received that piece of information, probably did not escape you. But this will not seem extraordinary to you, when I shall have made an end

of my story; for at the name of Alicante, my misfortunes rise more freshly to my recollection. It was in that city that I was born,—my father was an eminent exporter of its wines, and owned a large tract of vine country a few leagues from the town.

“I am one of three brothers,—all children of one birth—but my birth being announced as the first chime of twelve was heard from the tower of St Nicholas, whereas the twelfth chime was almost past before my brethren became citizens of the world, I was recognised as the first-born, and my father used often to say, that twelve seconds established the right of primogeniture as well as twelve months; and that my adroitness had secured my birth-right; and as I grew up, it gave me no small pleasure to learn that Castillo de Pedralba, with its rich vineyards, were destined to be mine; for my father, who prided himself upon the antiquity of his family, was

resolved that the estate bearing the family name should descend unbroken and unburdened to future generations.

“ Now it so happened, that my brother Battisto, who came into the world next after me, and my brother Antonio, who was third in order, were so like the first-born, and so like each other, that during the confusion incident upon such an occasion, the precedence might have been confounded, had it not fortunately happened, that my father—supposing that all was over, entered the apartment just after I was born; but finding that the affair instead of being concluded, was only beginning, and not knowing where the thing might end, he took me in his arms, and patiently waiting the event, secured my rights by keeping me separate from my brethren; and there being no better way of distinguishing us, small labels, marked one, two, and three, were suspended around our necks.

“ My mother, while she lived—which was not many years, always imagined she could distinguish one from another, especially her first-born from his followers ; and sometimes she went so far as to threaten to throw the labels into the fire, saying it was a strange thing indeed if a mother did not know her own children ; and this was a frequent cause of bickerings between her and my father, who would by no means consent to trust the rights of his first-born to his wife’s sagacity. Once, by way of making trial of it, he changed the labels ; and it is certain that she discovered the trick that had been played upon her ; nor would it be safe to aver that this was accidental—for perhaps to her heart, if not to her eyes, there might have been some distinction unknown to all others—especially as the privilege of being nursed at home had been conferred upon me, the first-born, my brothers being obliged to others than their mother for

their infant nourishment. I dwell with the greater exactness upon all this, because it is important to my story, that my right of primogeniture should be quite apparent.

“ But by whatever yearnings, or secret intimation, my mother was able to distinguish one son from another, this faculty was confined to herself. No one else had the presumption to say, that the slightest difference was discernible. In features, in stature, in complexion, in expression, all agreed, that three grapes could not be plucked so like each other, as were Gaston, Battisto, and Antonio de Pedralba. As for my father, he used to say, that the thing was so unnatural, the devil must be at the bottom of it,—a saying, the truth of which I have unfortunately lived to experience. Unlike the resemblances too, which are sometimes observable among children, but which, as they grow up become wider, ours were the same in youth as

in childhood—nearer they could not be; but when we had reached the age of fourteen, an accident happened to my youngest brother, which served in future as a sufficient, and to him a most unhappy distinction betwixt him and his two seniors. It was our frequent custom to practise the use of the small sword; and one day, while my two brothers were engaged in this pastime, the weapon which my brother Battisto used, and from the point of which the guard had fallen unperceived, entered the eye of Antonio, and he was ever afterwards deprived of the sight of the left eye, even as you now see mine.

“After this occurrence, it was therefore only between Battisto and myself, that there was no distinguishing mark: but perfect as this resemblance was, it extended no farther than to our external traits:—our characters were no ways similar. It is not for me to be the trum-

peter of my own virtues ; but as the character of my brother is so closely connected with the events I have to relate, I must tell you, that the general opinion was more favourable to me than to Battisto. His character was morose and selfish ; and as we grew old enough to have a comprehension of our rights and interests, he would often deride those pretensions which were founded upon priority of birth, and even hint at the slenderness of my claim to the family inheritance. I saw that, brother though he was, he hated me ; and I was even constrained to believe, from the malevolence which showed itself upon all occasions, that if ever he should have it in his power to injure me, I could not rest the chance of forbearance upon his fraternal affection.

“ As we grew up towards manhood, a new source of separation arose between us. The possessions of my father were separated only by

an alow fence from those of the wealthy Señor Manuel de Novelda. This gentleman had realised an ample fortune in Murcia, as a silk grower and merchant, and having retired from business, he had made purchase of the estate of which I speak, where he resided with his lady, and one daughter, Paulina, his only child. Nothing could be more natural than that my father, who I have already told you, prided himself greatly upon his blood, and his family castle, should be anxious to see his patrimonial estate swelled to so great importance as would necessarily attach to it, were it united to the possessions of Señor de Novelda; and my father had therefore early conceived the project of uniting the heir of Castillo de Pedralba, to the heiress of *Montelimar* (for such was the name of the possession). Senor de Novelda had married late in life; and had already descended into the vale of years, before Paulina had quite departed from

childhood; and although few men looked with greater complacency upon his riches and possessions, than did the retired merchant of Murcia, yet I have heard that he was not insensible to a certain feeling of inferiority, when from the windows of his own elegant, but modern mansion,* he saw the ancient towers of Pedralba rising above the trees, and apparently looking down upon his more upstart pretensions; and he therefore made no difficulty in acceding to the plan proposed to him by my father, for uniting the families, when the ages of the young persons should authorize the union. All this was resolved upon long before I had ever thought of a wife,—or Paulina, of a husband.

“ During the vintage, my father had always

* The neighbourhood of Alicante is remarkable for the great number of handsome modern houses that are scattered over it. These are the country houses of the merchants.

made it his custom to leave Alicante, and go to Castillo de Pedralba, and to take his three sons along with him; and at these times we could not but have frequent opportunities of seeing the señorita. At the vintage festivals, the young heiress of Montelimar, and the heir of Castillo de Pedralba were always expected to be partners in the *seguidilla*; a privilege which my priority of birth never failed to procure for me. Paulina was not however entirely monopolized by me; my brothers also partook in the festivities, and shared her favour; and while we were all four scarcely more than children, there was no small rivalry amongst us for a smile from Paulina, and it was always with ill-concealed jealousy, that my brother Battisto yielded to me those privileges, which my father made a point of being conceded to the heir of Castillo de Pedralba.

“ Whether it was, that my address and turn of conversation pleased the youthful Paulina,

more than these qualities in my brothers (for as to our personal appearance, she, no more than others, was able to distinguish betwixt us)—or whether the obedience which upon such points a Spanish señorita feels to be due to her parents, led Paulina to think of an alliance between duty and inclination—it is certain that, when she was no longer a child, and when the Señora de Novelda, her mother, judged it necessary to inform her of what had been determined upon, Paulina expressed no dislike to the arrangement, nor any greater hesitation, as the Señora her mother afterwards assured me, than might be expected on the part of a Señorita discreta y modesta. As for me, when my father, sometime about my nineteenth birth-day, called me to him, and told me of the alliance that had been concluded between the families, and of the important part that I was to bear in it; I expressed the utmost joy at the arrangement, and was

only anxious to know how soon it might be carried into effect. ‘Not, my son,’ said he, ‘until you have completed your one-and-twentieth year; and before that time, I design that you and your brothers shall see a little of the world; but more of that by and by.’ I was therefore forced to submit to this delay; which you may easily believe, I would rather have avoided.

“Probably, sir, you have not enjoyed many opportunities of seeing the females of this part of Spain? if you had travelled in the province of Murcia, you would be able better to appreciate the impatience I felt for the expiration of my term of probation. To the eye’s sparkle, and the lip’s arch beauty, which belong to all the daughters of Murcia, Paulina added graces peculiarly her own; her youthful sunny countenance, when the years of childhood were past, was sometimes visited by an expression of con-

templative thought that increased its charm, as the thin cloud veiling the sun-beams, throws upon the earth a softer and more mellowed beauty. She was then two years younger than me; but her figure, as well as her mind, had somewhat outstripped her age: the former, cast in the most perfect mould, added to an almost infantine lightness, those gracious contours which belong to maturer years,—and with the artlessness of childhood, her mind was already rich in those indescribable and nameless elegances and perceptions, which are rarely the accompaniments of even a riper age. Forgive me, sir, that I dwell so long upon this subject; but I wish to show you all that Paulina was, that you may understand all that Gaston has lost.

“ No sooner was this project of an alliance known to my brother Battisto, who for some time had only suspected it, than the unbrotherly feelings he had partly shown from boyhood

upwards, were more and more strongly displayed. I do not know whether he in reality loved Paulina, though it is not improbable that he had conceived some passion for her; at all events, he endeavoured to make me believe, that such was the case; and sometimes said, that I might surely have been contented with Castillo de Pedralba, without wishing to marry one who was beloved by another, merely that I might add to my possessions, the lordship of Montelimar. I will not take upon me to say, that Battisto did not love Paulina; it is indeed difficult for me to believe that any one could know her without loving her; but I cannot help thinking, that Señor de Novelda's possessions had greater charms in my brother's eyes than his daughter; and this I am entitled to believe, from the future conduct of my brother, who, if he had really been inspired with a virtuous love

for Paulina, would have been incapable of any other than virtuous actions.

“From the time that this intended alliance was made known to those whom it principally concerned, my intercourse with Paulina was less unreserved than it had been before: this limitation of our intercourse was owing to the custom of the country, by which young persons who are betrothed, are not permitted to see each other alone more than once. Once accordingly, during the vintage, when, as usual, both families were in the country, I was permitted to see Paulina, and to ask from her a ratification of the engagement entered into by our parents; and this was not refused; but when, after one stolen interview, I urged her to grant me another, I was unable to obtain this boon from Paulina, who sufficiently explained her refusal, by telling me that my brother, after having attempted to displace me from her affections, had more than

once tried to obtain her confidence, and proofs of her regard, by counterfeiting me; and rather than run the risk of exposing Paulina to such attempts, I agreed to forego the pleasure which I could not be sure of enjoying without a partaker; and so exchanging vows of affection, and receiving from her one of her glossy ringlets, we agreed to wait the expiration of the term of probation (then about a year and a half) fixed upon by our parents, contenting ourselves in the meanwhile with those casual opportunities of mutual intelligence, which lovers find even in the midst of witnesses.

“And thus the time glided away until the twentieth birth-day of myself and my brothers was at hand. Upon that day my father called us all into his presence, and addressed us nearly in the following words:—‘My children,’ said he, ‘it is not my design that you should settle in the world without having previously seen something

of it: I am also desirous of ascertaining the capabilities of you, my two younger sons, that I may know which of you to intrust with a share of my confidence, and profits in that business which I have hitherto carried on so advantageously: as for you, my eldest son,' addressing me, 'I design that you shall reside at Castillo de Pedralba, when a certain event in contemplation takes place, because the superintendence of the conjoined estates will require your presence; and besides, the large possessions of the heir of Castillo de Pedralba will then render it unnecessary for him to combine the objects of trade with the duties of a *propietario*, as my narrower means have obliged me to do. Nevertheless, I mean to make trial of your abilities and judgment, as well as of your brothers. My children, fourteen days have yet to elapse before your twentieth birth-day; employ that interval in making preparations for a journey of twelve

months, and in considering into what channel of commerce you will turn the sum I mean now to put into your hands; you have not lived here so long without having acquired some knowledge of commerce, and you know I have done my best to improve it. You will each of you direct your steps to whatever quarter of the world may seem to promise most: return hither on your twenty-first birth-day; and on that day,' turning to me, 'I will arrange that your marriage with the heiress of Montelimar shall take place. Whichever of you, my two younger sons, shall have turned to the best account the hundred thousand reals, which, in gold doubloons, are contained in each of these purses, shall immediately divide with me the cares and profits of my trade: for him who may prove himself less skilful, I design an employment in which less skill is required: and as for you,' again addressing me, 'if you should prove less successful than either of your

brothers, your gold shall be given to him whose success has been second :’ and so saying, he put into the hands of each a purse, containing specie to the amount of a hundred thousand reals. ‘Gaston,’ said he, detaining me as we were all three leaving the room, ‘there is little enough time for the necessary preparation for your journey ; you must not therefore waste any part of it in journeying to Montelimar ; in a few weeks I shall myself be there, and I promise you I will inform the Señora Paulina that it was by my commands you set out upon your journey without seeing her.’

“To this prohibition I was unwillingly obliged to yield obedience ; and I immediately began to consider in what kind of commerce I should engage, and whither I should direct my steps. After some consideration, I resolved upon taking my passage in a vessel bound for Smyrna, of which I also engaged a part of the freight,

laying out my doubloons in the purchase of wrought silks; and I was agreeably surprised to learn, that a part of the same freight had been engaged by my brother Antonio, who had also turned his eyes towards the east, but who had chosen an article of commerce different from that which I had selected. Neither of us knew any thing of the plans of our brother Battisto, who had disappeared from Alicante for several days, no one knew upon what errand, and who, when he returned, concealed his plans from every one.

“The prospect of so long an absence from Spain was far from being agreeable to me; but I dared not oppose myself to my father’s wishes, and I looked forward with joyful anticipation, to that return which would unite me to Paulina; as for the success of my traffic, it was only a desire to retain my father’s good opinion that rendered this a matter of any anxiety. On the day preceding our twentieth birth-day, the vessel set

sail for Smyrna. Prosperous breezes carried us to the Isle of Corsica; but as we entered the straits of Bonifacio the wind fell, and we were becalmed. At this time a small polacca hove in sight, also steering for the straits; and she, not being yet under the shelter of the Sardinian coast, continued to near us after we were becalmed, until she also was becalmed in the straits, at no greater distance from our vessel than a quarter of a league.

“ I had for some time kept my eye attentively upon the polacca; and as she approached nearer, I turned the ship’s telescope towards her, and continued my observation with the view of discovering whether she had come from the same port as ourselves, recollecting to have seen several polacca ships and brigs in the harbour of Alicante. I had scarcely rested my eye upon the deck of the vessel, when two men, who were seated at the stern, rose, and almost immediately

disappeared below deck ; but the short glimpse which the telescope had afforded me, enabled me to distinguish one as a well-known bravo of Alicante, an excellent swordsman, and a man of infamous character ; while the face and person of the other, although not so distinctly seen, from being more muffled up, led me strongly to believe that in him I saw my brother Battisto. I therefore entertained no doubt that he, as well as Antonio and myself, had determined upon trading to the east; and it was nothing extraordinary, but rather in unison with his character, that he had concealed his plans from us, and had hired a vessel to carry him whithersoever he might be bound, even although to the same port as that for which our ship was destined. I was at a loss, indeed, to account for the appearance of the bravo, apparently his companion, as no commercial speculation could have carried a person of his character and vocation from Alicante.

“ It was still day, when a light air springing up astern, the polacca again made sail ; and while our deep-laden vessel lay without receiving any impulse from the large sails that flapped to and fro,—the other, setting her studding-sails and stay-sails, moved through the water, neared us, and glided past. Neither of the individuals I had seen, were then upon deck. We hailed her—“ whither bound ? ”—“ to Zante ; ” and we speedily lost sight of her behind one of the islets that lie under the Sardinian shore. After a tedious voyage of five weeks, and having with difficulty escaped being wrecked on the rocky island of Serphanto, we cast anchor in the bay of Smyrna.

“ It was about a week after my arrival at Smyrna, that while sauntering late one evening among the *besesteins*, some of which were shut, though some were still open to customers, I perceived two men loitering near ; one of whom

instantly recalled my brother Battisto to my recollection; and the other, with quite as much distinctness, him whom I had seen on the deck of the polacca in the straits of Bonifacio. I was upon the point of springing forward to ascertain if my conjecture were well founded; but recollecting the mystery that seemed to accompany my brother's plans—if, indeed, this were he; and the dangerous company in which I found him—I hesitated; and before I had made up my mind, the individuals had disappeared. Alas! I have sufficient cause to remember that night. Taking a circuitous route to my own house, I was met upon my arrival with the appalling spectacle of my dear brother Antonio's body, pierced with many wounds. Those who bore him, related, that the sound of a fray had been heard; and that upon approaching the spot, two stranger Franks were seen retiring; and the body was found upon the street in the condition in which I beheld it.

“ As a description of my feelings at this moment would have no connexion with the events of my story, I shall leave you to imagine what I felt: however painful was the suspicion that arose in my mind, it nevertheless took root; but I was at the same time totally unable to understand the motive that could have dictated this act of cruelty towards my brother Antonio. Hated as I knew myself to be by my brother Battisto; rivals, as I had every reason to believe we were, for the favour of the Señora Paulina; and envied by him as the future possessor of the patrimonial inheritance,—as well as of Montelimar; it would have surprised me less, if the outrage had been committed upon myself: though I was far from being prepared to believe that my brother would carry his enmity to so great lengths; but that my brother Antonio had been selected as the victim, seemed inexplicable. The events, however, which afterwards laid open the

dark plot, sufficiently accounted for this apparent mystery.

“ Thinking it possible that my surmises might perhaps be too hasty ; and feeling it to be a duty incumbent upon me (as the brother of Antonio) to instigate some inquiry respecting his murderer, I demanded an investigation ; and this, accompanied by the promise of ample reward, soon procured the intelligence,—that the same evening my brother met his death, an individual, whose description answered to that of Battisto, embarked in a Greek vessel bound for Negropont ; and the other individual against whom my suspicions were excited, was speedily seized and brought into judgment by my description of his person ; as it was impossible however for me to adduce any evidence against him, he was dismissed. But the information which I had gathered, sufficiently proved to my mind, that some league for an evil purpose

existed between my brother Battisto and this bravo. In place of aiming any longer at concealment, I now met him at every turn; in whatever direction I walked or rode, he met or overtook me; and by the grossest insults endeavoured to provoke me into a quarrel, which I studiously avoided; but at length, meeting him at a private entertainment given by an Italian merchant at his villa near Smyrna, to which he had by some means contrived to be invited, he offered openly an affront so unpardonable to a man of honour, that there was no longer any escape from the encounter to which it had long been his evident intention to force me. We secretly retired from the entertainment to a secluded spot near at hand; and I had scarcely time to put myself upon my guard, ere the point of my opponent's sword was thrust into the eye—of which I am now blind; occasioning a wound precisely similar to that formerly in-

flicted upon my unfortunate brother. I did not then comprehend the reason why the destruction of the eye had been aimed at, nor did I even know that it had been aimed at all: but all this was quickly explained; and proved to be a necessary part of the plan laid for my ruin,—which I have already told you has been accomplished by means of this misfortune.

“I need not detail to you the events that followed; the commiseration which the loss of my eye excited, or the commercial speculations in which I busied myself; let me hasten to the time when I was made acquainted with the full extent of my misfortune.

“The year of my absence being nearly expired, and having laid out the profit of my speculation from Alicante, in the purchase of mohair, amber, musk, and certain gums, I set sail in a vessel bound for Leghorn; and having after a prosperous voyage to that part, turned

all my merchandise into money, I took shipping to Barcellona, and journeyed to Alicante by land, that I might be able to calculate more certainly upon arriving on the appointed day.

“As I proceeded upon my journey, my mind was filled with the brightest visions of the future. I could not suppose for a moment, that the loss of an eye would change the heart of Paulina; and I mused, without any feeling of uneasiness, upon the odd change that had taken place in the family likenesses,—for the likeness between Battisto and myself was at an end; while on the other hand, I had become the image of my brother Antonio. Well, I thought, one good at least has arisen out of my misfortune—it will no longer be in the power of Battisto to deceive my Paulina. My mind then reverted to Smyrna, and the suspicions I had entertained of Battisto, as being concerned in the death of Antonio; but as I approached

nearer to home, and as the recollections of childhood, and the days in which we had all loved each other, forced themselves upon me, I almost dismissed from my mind the suspicions I had entertained, and even blamed myself for having ever harboured them. ‘O no!’ I said to myself, ‘Antonio fell by the hand of the bravo, with whom he had doubtless quarrelled, and I have been mistaken in the person of Battisto.’

“It was late, on the evening before our twenty-first birth-day, when I found myself at my father’s door: it was partly open, and I walked in, proceeding straight to the well-remembered room in which my father and my brothers had been accustomed to assemble in the evening. The room was dimly lighted, and at the farther end sat my brother Battisto, clad in a deep mourning suit, and apparently busily employed in writing.

“No sooner did he hear footsteps, than turning towards the door, and starting from his seat, he advanced to meet me with a sorrowful countenance, though not altogether devoid of such a subdued smile as is natural to one who, in the midst of sorrow, advances to receive a dear friend.

“‘Welcome,’ said he, extending his hand to me; ‘welcome back, my dear brother Antonio—but alas! it is under afflicting circumstances that we meet.’

“Totally forgetful at the moment of all my suspicions of Battisto’s knowledge of Antonio’s death, and recollecting only that I might now well be mistaken for him, I answered, ‘Alas! he whom you take me for, is dead; I am not Antonio, but Gaston: but tell me, Battisto, what new misfortune has fallen upon us; I fear there is some calamity more fresh than the loss of our dear Antonio,—is our father well?’

“ While I continued speaking, my brother’s countenance assumed an expression, first of astonishment, and then of displeasure. ‘ Antonio,’ said he, ‘ this is not a time for jesting: our brother Battisto has not returned,—and perhaps never may return; rumour says that he died in a foreign land: we have had differences,—but God knows that I forgive him, and would give Castillo de Pedralba that he were yet alive;—his jealousy of the first-born was natural,—but alas! my brother, how shall I find words to tell you, that our beloved father was this day consigned to the tomb; fortunately, I, his first-born, and—forgive me, Antonio—perhaps his favourite son,—returned in time to receive his last sigh.’

“ While my brother Battisto spoke, the astonishment which had at first appeared in his countenance, was naturally transferred to mine; and an indistinct gleam of the truth had begun

to shine upon my mind, when hearing the announcement of my father's death, I exclaimed, as he concluded, 'Dead ! Battisto—ah ! why did you consign our parent to the grave before the arrival of his Gaston, who might at least have had the melancholy duty of laying his honoured head in it.'

“ ‘ Brother,’ said Battisto, ‘ this jesting is surely ill-timed,—if you had two eyes, I would believe that you were Battisto, and that he desired to cheat me of my rights,—but as for this unseasonable merriment, ’t is not like my good brother Antonio ; but pray leave me at present, to make an end of some writings respecting my nuptials with the Señora Paulina de Novelda, which take place to-morrow.’

“ Before my brother had made an end of this reply, I had sketched in my mind the outline of the whole train of villany that had been planned and executed. I saw that Battisto's determina-

tion was, to personate me; and thus to secure the paternal inheritance, as well as the heiress of Montelimar: I now comprehended the mysterious tragedy that had been acted at Smyrna—to have made away with me, would have been a less certain game; both because the disappearance of the heir might have excited suspicions against the second son; and because the dislike which Battisto well knew Paulina entertained towards him, might have frustrated his designs had he appeared before her in his own character. On the other hand, the plan schemed by my unnatural brother, involved neither of these difficulties. By rendering me the precise image of Antonio, and disposing of him, he had got entirely rid of me; and knowing well that no claimant with two eyes could appear, and that every one knew his brother Antonio to be one-eyed, he was in a condition to maintain the imposture against all the world.

“As this train of thought passed through my mind, I perceived how impossible it would be for me to establish my rights; and even how nearly it would resemble imposture, were I to tell Paulina, that accident had made me the exact likeness of Antonio, and yet that I should be unable to confirm this story by the appearance of Antonio. All this while, I continued standing in the room, but without speaking a syllable; while Battisto had calmly resumed his writing, as if nothing had taken place.

“The extreme of impudent daring on his part was so altogether novel, that I felt bewildered, and could scarcely believe in it. I had heard of men personating each other, but never before had I heard of one man personating another to his face. Here was I, Gaston—and there sat my brother Battisto; but this Battisto calmly asserted that he was me,—that I was another person,—and that he himself was dead! Had it

not been for the importance of the stake at issue, I might almost have been tempted to smile at so unheard-of effrontery. But my dilemma chiefly arose from the difficulty of perceiving any way by which I could extricate myself from the toils of my brother. Every one knew that Antonio was one-eyed,—what proof had I more than my own assertion, that anything so unlikely had taken place as that I had lost my eye like him,—and that he was dead! Would not all men rather believe that Antonio, the one-eyed, stood before them, and that he had contrived this tale to gain the inheritance of his brother!!

“ At length, however, recovering in some degree, from the stupefaction into which the hardihood of my brother had thrown me, and remembering only his villany, and my own rights; I said, with as much calmness as the circumstances would permit, ‘ Battisto, I can no longer doubt your intention of defrauding me of

my paternal inheritance, and of even attempting to deceive Señora de Novelda: the first, your villany may possibly accomplish,—the second, I think you will find more difficult: I am acquainted with every part of your scheme,—I know that you followed me to Smyrna,—I know that you hired a ruffian to disfigure me, and to murder our brother; I know it all, Battisto,—and you know that you are a villain.’

“ ‘ And if I am a villain, and if all this be true, what then?’ said he, laying down his pen, and looking me full in the face; ‘ how, I say, will this knowledge benefit you; who do you think will believe your tale? Santa Maria,’ continued he, holding towards me the taper that stood before him, and at the same time bursting into a fit of laughter; ‘ he has done the thing to a nicety!—why, if I did not know you to be Gaston, I could peril Castillo de Pedralba that the blind eye belonged to Antonio.’

“ The unblushing avowal of villany which I had just heard, joined with the intolerable mockery of mirth, roused me into passion. ‘ Villain—murderer!’ I said, ‘ you will live to rue your crimes: as you have killed Antonio, so also, I have no doubt, you have killed our father;’ as I said this, I could perceive a slight tremor pass over his countenance: ‘ but,’ continued I, ‘ your projects are yet but half accomplished: to-morrow, the judge shall determine between our rights; and as for your wicked intention of deceiving Paulina, I fear you not.’

“ The answer of Battisto was, drawing from his bosom a small packet, and displaying a lock of hair, which I instantly knew to be Paulina’s. ‘ This,’ said he, ‘ is a love-favour; how and when obtained, you may possibly guess. Let me advise you, as a friend, not to expose yourself to ridicule. Paulina believes that I am dead, on the authority of a forged letter written in

Antonio's name to his father, from Smyrna; she knows that, of the two remaining brothers, Gaston only has two eyes; and she will scarcely believe that one-eyed Antonio is two-eyed Gaston; or that Battisto has come alive to deceive her; and besides, even if you could prevail upon her to believe your story, think you that she would not prefer a husband with two eyes to him who has only one!

“I restrained with difficulty the passion that boiled within me; and hastily leaving the room, I shut myself up in my own chamber, where I had leisure to contemplate the gulph into which the villany of my brother was precipitating me. I could perceive no means of throwing off the entanglements he had spread around me;—my inheritance I looked upon as having already passed from me;—and even Paulina, if she believed Battisto to be dead, could not avoid yielding to the evidence of her senses, in also

believing him with two eyes to be Gaston: and yet I entertained a confident persuasion, that she would sooner or later discover the trick that was put upon her,—though, in all probability, not before the nuptials should be completed. Could I but see her,’ said I, ‘I am certain I could convince her of my identity;’ and I resolved early next day to set out for Montelimar, that I might see Paulina before she was led to the altar.

“The whole of this night I passed in pacing up and down my chamber, contriving plans for establishing my identity, and perceiving their instability almost as soon as they were reared; lamenting, even with tears, the hopelessness of my condition; cursing the cruelty and perfidy of my brother; and, above all, distracted at the possibility of losing Paulina. At times it all seemed but a wild and improbable fiction,—a mere dream. ‘Impossible!’ I said; ‘it cannot be that Paulina is thus to be snatched from

me;—does not she love me?—are we not pledged? Ridiculous, to suppose that I am to be cheated out of all by a mere trick: I am still Gaston—still the first-born—still the beloved of Paulina: I will hold fast my rights, and crush my unnatural brother.’ But while I boldly soliloquized in this manner, I happened to turn in front of a large mirror—Antonio, not Gaston, was reflected in it. Alas! thought I, as I stood silently contemplating the damning contradiction of my identity,—alas! what signifies my knowledge that I am Gaston? He spoke truly, when he said, ‘Who will believe your tale?’ who, indeed! men can but judge with their eyes:—but then, with Paulina, there are other means of intelligence: I can remind her of a thousand things known only to the true Gaston. And thus I endeavoured to persuade myself that all was not lost.

“ Scarcely had the morning dawned, when I

hastened to carry my complaint before the authorities of the city ; and a story of such outrageous injustice and oppression, as I told, instantly procured an order for the attendance of my brother to answer to the charge preferred against him. As I returned from the house of the chief magistrate, I met several persons known to myself or my family. ‘ Ah, Señor Antonio,’ said one, ‘ you are returned then at last.’ ‘ My dear friend,’ said another, of whom I knew but little, but who had been the intimate friend of Antonio, ‘ how glad I am to see you, your brother Gaston told me he expected you last night ;’ at the same time shaking me violently by the hand. I saw that it would be in vain to say, ‘ I am not Antonio, but Gaston.’ I should only be thought mad, or an imposter ; and my heart died within me, as judging from what I saw, I augured the probable termination of my appeal to the magistrate.

“ Battisto yielded instant obedience to the order for his appearance; and the alcalde having taken his chair, said, addressing me, ‘ I understand your complaint to be this: you allege that he who calls himself Gaston, the eldest son of the late worthy gentleman Señor de Pedralba, is not Gaston, but Battisto his brother; and you assert that you whom he calls Antonio, is not Antonio but Gaston, whom he pretends to be;— is it so?’

“ ‘ This, said I, ‘ is my statement.’

“ ‘ And how,’ returned the magistrate, ‘ do you propose to prove the truth of your statement? For since I saw you this morning, I have learned that there are many persons in this city, and I doubt not that some are in this court, ready to prove that he, whom you say you are, had both eyes; and that he, whom your brother says you are, had one eye, as you have: how do you get the better of such evidence?’

“In reply to this, I told the magistrate the whole story as it happened, and then said, ‘there are many in Smyrna who could prove that I speak the truth.’

“‘T is a long way to send to Smyrna for a witness,’ said the magistrate; ‘and besides, the oath of a Spaniard is as good as the oath of a Turk: have you any witnesses?’ continued he, addressing my brother, who stood all this while with a countenance of the utmost indifference.

“‘Many,’ replied he; and immediately a host of persons stepped forward, and swore positively that I was no other than Antonio,—and that Battisto was no other than Gaston.

“‘This,’ said the magistrate, ‘looks very like imposture;—if we had any evidence that Battisto is dead, then—but indeed without this the case is clear.’

“‘I have such evidence,’ said my brother; ‘and first, the servants of my father, as well as

several of his friends, averred, that some months ago, Señor de Pedralba had received intimation of his son Battisto's death ;'—but this was not all ; forward stepped the villain to whom I directly owed the loss of my eye ; and he swore upon the Holy Evangelists, that he had seen the dead body of Battisto at Smyrna.'

“ ‘ There is no doubt,’ said the magistrate, ‘ of this being a piece of roguery,—and very clumsily contrived, too. It is proved, that Señor Battisto is dead ; it is proved also, that one of the two remaining sons of Señor de Pedralba was one-eyed ; and that he is Antonio, the youngest ; therefore the only other must be Gaston, who has two eyes,—and who consequently, cannot be any other than the person against whom this wicked complaint is brought. The ends of justice must be looked to,—and this imposter must not escape punishment.’ ”

“ ‘ Do not, I entreat you, be severe,’ said

Battisto; ‘ the ends of justice will be sufficiently answered by a short imprisonment,—God forbid that I should be vindictive ; I freely forgive him—and if you, Señor, be disposed to remit punishment altogether—’

“ ‘ Not altogether,’ said the magistrate ;—and I was just beginning to exclaim against the injustice of the proceedings, when I was laid hold of, and hurried away to prison.

“ I had never contemplated a result like this : I had thought it likely indeed, that I might obtain no advantage by my appeal ; but I calculated upon a more successful appeal to the heart of Paulina, and had ordered mules, which were even then waiting at the door of the court, to carry me with all speed to Montelimar. But now, all seemed lost—and my heart sunk within me. My brother had doubtless foreseen this result ; and hence had arisen his great readiness to meet my appeal. I well knew he was artful

enough to avoid all opportunities of private, or confidential communication with Paulina; I knew that the usages of the country, as well as the timidity natural to a bride, would aid his scheme; and I knew also, that he possessed the same love-pledge that I myself possessed—no doubt obtained by him stealthily, or by deception, at the time when he disappeared for some days from Alicante previous to our departure for Smyrna—alas! how could Paulina escape the toils that were spread for her? and I sorrowed as much over her misfortune, as over my own—for if Battisto should prove successful, how wretched would be the fate of my gentle Paulina, linked with so consummate a villain!

“Disfigured,—over-reached,—cheated of my inheritance,—robbed of my hopes,—infamy was now added to my misfortunes; I was branded as a rogue,—treated as an imposter,—and thrown into a common prison; and while I still con-

tinued in captivity, sometimes raging like a wild beast in his cage,—sometimes sunk in the lowest despair ; one day, and another day passed away ; and the hour had doubtless gone by, when Paulina,—my own—my plighted Paulina, was led from the altar, the wife of my brother ! My brain was on fire—agony, disappointment, fury, and despair, alternately wrought within, and stung me into madness. I could have torn my brother piece-meal, —and trampled upon the living world : I threw myself against the door of my prison, and wrenched the iron bars of its window, till I fell from exhaustion,—my hands dripping with blood. At length, upon the fifth day of my confinement, the door of my prison was thrown open, and I was told I was at liberty.

“ As I mechanically took the road to Montelimar, scarcely a gleam of hope found its way to my heart : it is all over, I said,—she is long ere this the wife of Battisto : but I still went

onward; and in a few hours I saw the groves of date trees that lie around the village. As I hurried rapidly forward, that suspense might be exchanged for the more tolerable agony of certainty, I perceived the Cura of the village coming towards me.

“ ‘ Ah, my son,’ said he, ‘ you are too late,—the festivities are over. The houses of Pedralba and Novelda are united.’

“ It was enough,—I was indeed too late; Paulina was for ever lost to me. I turned from the village without entering it; determined to leave for ever, the scenes of my happy youth, and miserable manhood; and pursuing my way westward through Murcia, I at length reached Granada. The means of support with which I was but scantily provided when I left Alicante, were soon expended,—and at Granada, I found myself without a real: but still I went on, insensible to hardships, and careless of life, until I

arrived at Malaga. There, for more than a month, I picked up a precarious subsistence by seeking for shell-fish, and selling them,—until the morning when I accosted you, as you were passing towards the quay.

“This, sir, is the whole of my story,—and now that you have heard it, you will allow that it is possible for a man to be ruined through the loss of an eye.”

CHAPTER XIX.

BEING THE CONTINUATION OF THE VOYAGE TO ALICANTE;
AND CONCLUDING WITH THE SEQUEL OF THE ENTER-
TAINING STORY OF GASTON DE PEDRALBA, THE ONE-
EYED.

“TRULY, my friend,” said I, when Gaston made an end of his story, “I was mistaken in supposing that the loss of one eye could not prove a man’s ruin: it is indeed too clearly shown by your history, that such may be the case. This brother of yours, Battisto, deserves to be sent to the galleys; and who knows what may yet turn up?—crimes like his, seldom pass unpunished,—and as for that charming señorita, she has no doubt discovered ere this, the trick that

has been played, and may welcome back the true Gaston."

"Ah!" replied he, "my Paulina is too virtuous to break the solemn vows she has taken, even although she has been deceived."

"Nay," said I, "you are over scrupulous; Paulina has pledged her vows to Gaston, not to Battisto: if one man sells another a cask of wine, which turns out to be water, 't is no bargain: in truth, Paulina is at this moment your wife,—not Battisto's."

"It may be so," said he; "but in the meantime, all the advantage lies with him:" and in such discourse as this we passed our time, sitting upon deck, until it grew dark,—and next morning we found that we were approaching Alicante, having long before descried the castle, perched like an eagle's nest upon the summit of the high rock that hangs over the town,—and the long line of coast stretching to the eastward, which

was the coast of Valencia—the richest and most charming province in the king of Spain's dominions,—surpassed by none in the variety and excellence of its productions; the beauty of its cities, and the magnificence of its ruins; the salubrity of its climate, and the unfading verdure of its fields; and equalled by few in the manly virtues of its men, and the seductive graces of its women. A little before sunset, we dropped anchor in the basin.

During the afternoon, the agitation of my companion had been great as he approached the city, which he had quitted under such distressing circumstances, : but how was his agitation increased by the spectacle that awaited him.

The ship had come to anchor, and I was standing upon deck, watching from the stern two other vessels, that were gliding majestically into the harbour, when suddenly I heard my companion, who stood near, exclaim, “Jesus

Maria !”—and turning towards him, I perceived that his face was overspread with a deadly paleness,—his whole frame trembled violently,—and his gaze was intently, wildly fixed upon a number of men chained together, who, upon the deck of a large mastless ship, were raising, by a windlass, mud and sand from the bottom of the harbour. “Look yonder,” said he, “do you see among these men, one —”

There was no occasion to say more. “I see, I see,” said I, “one the image of yourself, but that he has both eyes.”

“’T is my brother you see,” said he eagerly ; “it is Battisto !—gracious God, how came he there,—a convict—and chained.”

“It is easily comprehended,” said I ; “his crimes have been discovered, and Paulina will yet be yours.”

“Alas ! my poor guilty brother,” said he ; “let us hasten on shore, that we may learn more of this.”

We accordingly lost no time in presenting ourselves before the same magistrate who had formerly judged the case. He expressed much pleasure, and some surprise, at seeing Gaston ; mingled, however, with considerable embarrassment ; for which there was scarcely any occasion,—for had I myself been judge, I could not have decided otherwise than he had done.

“ Take this,” said he, hastily writing a few lines, “ to the prison, and you will there receive the information you desire, more correctly than I am able to give it. I may, however, tell you, that the confession of Rodrigo Garcia, which you are about to read, was made by him when on his death-bed,—he having been mortally wounded in the prosecution of some villanous purpose.”

We hastened to the prison, where upon presenting the order from the alcalde, the paper in question was put into our hands ; and unfolding it with the utmost impatience, we read,—

THE CONFESSION OF RODRIGO GARCIA.

“FEELING the approach of death, and anxious for the consolations of religion, which cannot be administered without a full confession of my crimes; and assured by my ghostly confessor, that as my life had been stained with innocent blood, to the shedding of which others than myself have been accessory,—it is a duty I owe to society, as well as necessary to the safety of my own soul, that I make a written and a full confession of all the crimes, &c.”—and the confession then detailed many dark deeds in which the wretched man had been a participator, which having no connexion with this history, I pass over,—and it then proceeded in these words:—

“ But no transaction in which I have ever been engaged, weighs heavier upon my conscience

than that into which I entered with Battisto de Pedralba; of which the following are the particulars:—

“ I engaged myself, for a certain sum of money and future advantages, to enter into his service for one year, and during that time to obey him in all respects, even although the lives of others should be sacrificed; provided always that my own safety could be secured.

“ Battisto hired a vessel, in which we embarked for Smyrna,—and during the voyage he explained the nature of the services required of me, and laid open his own project; which was to obtain his father’s inheritance, and the hand of the Señora de Novelda. I agreed to execute all that he required of me; and we reached Smyrna, after passing in the straits of Bonifacio, the vessel in which were the brothers of my employer.

“ After that ship arrived at Smyrna, my pa-

tron and myself watched a favourable opportunity to make away with one of the brothers, whose name was Antonio,—this being the first part of the scheme,—and this we speedily accomplished. In the pocket of the murdered man were several papers in his own handwriting—and as the imitation of writing has always been familiar to me, and has often been necessary to the execution of my wicked projects, my patron dictated a letter to his father at Alicante, relating how his son Battisto had been found dead in the streets; and to this letter I signed the name of Antonio, so that not even he himself, had he been living, could have distinguished it from his own hand.

“The next part of the scheme was, to pick a quarrel with my patron’s remaining brother, Gaston, the eldest, and force him to a combat; when my instructions were to wound him in the left eye, so that he should be deprived of it in

the same manner as he who was murdered had been: a task of no great difficulty to me, so adroit as I am in the use of the small sword—and this I also accomplished. My last orders were, to meet my patron at Marseilles a week before the expiration of the year during which my services were engaged. I met him: ‘Come to my house,’ said he, ‘and sup with me:’ and as we walked along the street, he said, ‘you will see no one but my father,—this is the last important service I require of you,—take this:’ putting a very small phial into my hand; ‘I will withdraw his attention, while you—you understand me?’ I did understand him. We met the old man at supper. ‘Come,’ said my employer, when supper was ended, ‘let us pledge a glass to the health and speedy return of our dear Antonio;’ and while he, affecting to be seized with sudden sickness, withdrew the attention of his father, I emptied the contents of the phial into the

goblet of wine that was already poured out. It is well known, that Señor de Pedralbá died that night.

“ To this confession I have only to add, that I was despatched the next morning to Montelimar, as the confidential messenger of Gaston, to bear to Señora Paulina the intelligence, that his father was dead. I was also instructed to say, that the grief into which he was plunged, must be accepted by the Señora as an apology why I was not the bearer of a letter; and that the care of the funeral obsequies and other weighty matters, would prevent him from being at Montelimar, until the day upon which it had been long resolved that he should be permitted to claim the hand of the Señora at the altar; and I was also desired to say, that Señor de Pedralba had, before he died, strictly charged his son that his death should not postpone those

nuptials which, had he been permitted to live, would have afforded him so much gratification to witness; and along with these instructions, I was the bearer of credentials,—which consisted in a lock of hair, to be shown to the Señora Paulina, as the evidence of my being the messenger of Gaston. This commission I faithfully executed; and by the request of Paulina, the greater part of what I had said to her, I repeated to her father, and to the Señora her mother: and I request that a copy of this confession may be sent to the Señora Paulina, that her eyes may be opened to the villany and deceit of which she has been made the victim.”

“And was a copy of this confession sent to Senora Paulina?” said Gaston, turning to the individual who waited to receive back the paper.

“It was,” replied he: “the same messenger who went to Montelimar to arrest the husband of

that lady, was the bearer of a certified copy of this confession."

"This," said I, as we turned away from the prison, "explains every mystery, and confirms all that you but guessed at in your narrative."

"I am yet in doubt," returned Gaston, "upon the most essential matter of all; for is not Paulina yet the wife of my brother, convict though he be? but let us to Montelimar without delay; it is at least some consolation to know, that Paulina is undeceived, and will receive me as Gaston.'

To Montelimar accordingly we hastened; and passing by Castillo de Pedralba, we proceeded straight to the house of Señor de Novelda.

"Is the Señora de Pedralba within?" said I, addressing the porter who answered our summons.

“There is no Señora de Pedralba here,” said he; “but Doña Paulina de Novelda is within. It is perhaps that lady for whom your Grace inquires.”

“Hear you that?” said I, turning to my companion: he had heard,—and darting past the porter, he bounded across the court, leaving to me the honour of being marshalled to the door. It was several minutes before tardy etiquette conducted me into the house, and the door of the saloon being thrown open, I found Gaston and Paulina locked in each other’s arms: they seemed to have lost the power of utterance,—but tears, those strange evidences of joy as well as of sorrow, fell fast upon Paulina’s quick-heaving bosom.

I found the young Murcian quite as charming as Gaston had represented her. She was indeed an exquisite creature; and when I looked

at her, I could scarcely blame the extravagances of which her lover had been guilty, in dashing himself against the door of his prison and lacerating his hands in wrenching the bars that separated him from her,—though such actions had seemed to me at the time, strange lengths to go, for the sake of a woman.

After the first transports of joy were over, the inquiring looks of Gaston plainly told his mistress, how anxious he was to learn upon what footing she stood with his brother.

“I am sure, Gaston,” said she, “you are dying with curiosity to know all that passed between me and your wicked brother; and I long to tell you, almost as much as you long to hear:” and so, the lovely Paulina, seating herself upon a sofa, upon which she permitted Gaston to place himself beside her, and with a look of confiding affection, placing her hand

in his, gave the following narrative of the events of which we were both ignorant.

“You have learned, from the confession of that monster Rodrigo, what means were taken by your brother Battisto to deceive me; I will therefore pass over the conversation I held with him,—it is enough to say, that I believed him to be the messenger of Gaston; and that in obedience to the dying wish of your father, I prepared to exchange with you at the altar, the vows by which we had long been secretly bound to each other.”

Here Paulina cast down her eyes,—a charming blush spread over her cheeks,—and so bewitching did she look, that Gaston assuredly showed himself more than mortal in sparing her confusion, and in refraining from pressing to his bosom, the lovely girl whose lips had just been the ingenuous interpreters of her heart.

“Battisto arrived at Montelimar on the appointed day. All had been previously arranged by my father,—and I did not meet Battisto, until in my bridal dress, and covered by a thick white veil, I was conducted by my father to the chapel; where, without once raising my eyes to the face of him who stood beside me, the ceremony was completed, and I left the altar, the wife, as I believed, of Gaston. I need not ask you if you remember the exchange of rings we made, on that only evening when we met in the palm-avenue. I wore at my nuptials the ring you gave me; and as we returned from the chapel, I said to Battisto, ‘Gaston, show me the ring you promised always to wear,—see, there is yours.’

“‘Ah!’ said he, ‘I have forgotten it.’

“This was unlike Gaston; and I was mortified and slightly piqued. ‘Are your promises so

soon forgotten, Gaston?’ I said: ‘I should not wonder, if you have also forgotten the place where we exchanged these pledges;’ and as I said this, I raised my eyes to his countenance for the first time. I did not doubt that it was the face of Gaston,—and yet, at that moment, Battisto rose to my recollection. ‘Come, Gaston,’ I said, ‘acknowledge that you have lost Paulina’s ring; but lead her to the spot where she gave it, and she will pardon you, and give you another in its stead.’

“Battisto would have evaded this request; but I could not understand why Gaston should be unwilling to satisfy me,—and I said to him, ‘I will not believe that you have already forgotten the place;’ and again I glanced at his countenance,—and again, while I believed that I looked upon Gaston, the memory of Battisto painfully flashed upon my mind. I will not say

that I then suspected; but I felt troubled. Many of my father's friends having been invited to partake in our festivities, I saw Battisto only in the midst of company; but numerous trifling incidents occurred during the day, to recall the painful feeling that had passed through my mind on our return from the chapel, and the recollection of Battisto obtruded itself with unaccountable, and unpleasant frequency upon my imagination. At length, one insignificant word roused suspicion: it was my own name;—till then, Battisto had never during all the day said 'Paulina.' It was by that word, that I had before been able to detect the impositions he had practised in counterfeiting you—and no sooner had he said 'Paulina,' than his former attempts to personate you, rushed upon my memory. I know not, Gaston, by what sense I am able to distinguish your 'Paulina' from the 'Paulina' of all the

world beside—but so it is. I said to myself, ‘is it possible that I am deceived?’ and now that suspicion had taken possession of me, I watched every look, and word, and movement of Battisto, and a thousand insignificant, nameless, and yet obvious dissimilarities, speedily converted my suspicion almost into certainty. Gaston, you may easily imagine what perturbation filled the breast of your Paulina at this moment: indistinct fears for your safety were mingled with the horrible consciousness, that I had given myself to another,—and I resolved to avow my suspicions to my father.

“Before the festivities of the day had concluded, I drew my father from his guests, and opened my mind to him. ‘Let me remain one month,’ I said, ‘under my father’s roof: if he be indeed Gaston, no evil can result from this; but if my suspicions be just——!’ ‘It shall be

as you desire,' said my father; 'before a month shall have elapsed, something will, doubtless, occur to confirm your suspicions, if they be indeed well founded; but I trust, my child, you are mistaken:' and my father undertook to assign to my husband some plausible reason for my conduct.

"The next morning we learned that urgent affairs had called Battisto to Murcia; which was probably a contrivance that the month should pass away without affording many opportunities of increasing the suspicions which he must have been well assured I entertained. Six days afterwards he returned; and on the morning of the seventh day, a party of horsemen rode up to Montelimar, one of whom delivered a paper to be given to me; and they then galloped up the hill towards Castillo de Pedralba. I need not say that the paper proved to be the confession you

have read, and that the party of horsemen was commissioned to arrest your brother. But my mind was far from being set at rest by the details contained in the confession: it was, indeed, true, that the early discovery of your brother's crimes had saved me much misery, and I learned from it that your life, at least, had not been sacrificed to your brother's projects; but still I was uncertain as to your fate, and I was the wife of another.

“We were quickly informed of the condemnation of Battisto; and immediately my father despatched a messenger to Rome with an authenticated copy of the confession, and a full statement of all that had taken place; and he also brought the affair before the court at Granada; and a month had scarcely elapsed, when we received the welcome intelligence, that the court at Granada had found that no marriage had ever

taken place, as I had never consented to become the wife of Battisto—(here I cast a triumphant look at Gaston, who was, however, too much occupied with Paulina to notice my triumph),—and soon after, the messenger returned from Rome, bearing the decree of his holiness the Pope, by which the marriage, if any had taken place, was dissolved: and thus, Gaston, you see, that—” ‘That you are, and ever have been, my own Paulina,’ said Gaston, snatching her to his arms; and the blushing girl, disengaging herself in a moment, said, ‘Is he not my husband!’ and allowing her head to fall gently upon his breast, added, ‘It was to thee, Gaston, my heart offered its vows of love and obedience at the altar.’ But Señor de Novelda, not quite satisfied with this marriage of the heart, a few days afterwards conducted his daughter to the church, where Gaston and Paulina were united; and this

time Paulina said not a word about remaining a month under her father's roof. Very different was the appearance of Gaston de Pedralba in the habiliments of a bridegroom, from the Gaston I had met on the quay at Malaga; and as I saw him in his own mansion, seated beside his charming bride, I could not but whisper in his ear, 'Sad ruin truly does the loss of an eye bring upon a man:' and this is all that I know of the history of Gaston de Pedralba, the one-eyed.'

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH IT IS RECOUNTED HOW THE ALCALDE OF TARIFA'S
SUPERSTITION PROVED STRONGER THAN HIS EYE-SIGHT,
AND WHEREIN A CERTAIN MYSTERIOUS PERSONAGE IS
AGAIN BROUGHT UPON THE TAPIS.

“WELL,” said I to myself, as I was jogging on my mule through the palm forest of Elche towards Orihuela, “Providence has of late kindly permitted me to be the instrument of doing good; so that, I fancy my evil deeds are beginning to be outweighed; and after all, what are they?—only helping myself to a reward for slaying Andrades;—deceiving the two painters, and profiting slightly by their credulity;—personating a ghost at Tarifa;—running off

with the relics,—and declaring myself heir to the three smugglers: as for ridding the world of a few worthless men,—of Andrades, who would assuredly have killed his wife,—of the rascally painter, who had poisoned his brother,—of the two smugglers, who intended making me food for fishes;—these were good, rather than evil deeds. The captain trader may, 'indeed, have been an honest man; but I had the best possible excuse for running him through the body, because it was either run him through, or be run through. And then, how large a set-off have I against my peccadillos! If I helped myself to Andrades' strong box, who had so good a title to it as myself? If I deceived the two painters, and profited by their credulity, did I not thereby save Violante from marrying a villain? If I personated a ghost at Tarifa, was it not the means of delivering two innocent persons

from captivity? If I took a liberty with the relics, were they not put to a good use, in purchasing a hundred masses for Paulo's soul? and if I declared myself heir to the three smugglers, who but myself had sent their gold a-begging? and who was there to dispute the heirship with me, but the king of Spain, who was in truth indebted to me more than the value of the inheritance, for ridding his coasts of a nuisance?—and have I not been just now the instrument of making two persons happy? for if I had not taken compassion upon Gaston de Pedralba, and hired him as my servant, and brought him to Alicante, Castillo de Pedralba might have remained without an owner, and the Señora Paulina without a husband.” Thus I reconnoitred in my own mind the moral position in which I stood: it was the first time I had ever found leisure or inclination to make such an

examination; and it was with feelings of no small self-complacency, that fairly balancing the good against the evil, I came to the inevitable conclusion, that I was an ingenious, and withal an honest gentleman; and that I had by no means verified the predictions of those who prophesied that I should turn out a rogue.

I next fell to a consideration of my external position, which was to be judged of by a scrutiny into the interior of my purse. No one, I thought, could deny that fortune had used me unkindly. The execution of my preceptor lost me a round sum in Cadiz; the four thousand crowns which I had earned by my services to Ramirez, had been unjustly taken from me at Tarifa; and the same disaster that occasioned this, had also separated me from Maraquita, at the very moment when I had made myself sure of a sprightly and agreeable partner, with

a magnificent portion of two or three millions of reals.

In short, so hardly had I been used, that but for my valiant extermination of the smugglers, and the timely departure of Paulo (God rest his soul !), I should scarcely have had a fuller purse than when I set out with the design of filling it. These last events had indeed replenished my stores, and I was yet in possession of five thousand crowns; but this was only a scanty provision for a man who was no novice in the art of spending; and I resolved that something should be done to increase it. But here arose the usual difficulty in such cases; how was this resolution to be effected? To some, this question would have been easily answered; but to one like myself, who had never been concerned in any transaction that was not entered into from virtuous motives, the choice was one of greater difficulty.

Bitterly did I regret that a foolish excess of friendship, and a too nice sense of honour, had prevented me from exerting in my own favour, the address I had so successfully employed for Ramirez; for Violante was, after all, to my scrupulous taste, the most charming of all the women whom chance had thrown in my way,—to say nothing of her dower: and while yet undecided how to act, though with a strong persuasion that my fortune was yet to be made by the capture of some such tender heart as Paulina's, I was roused from my cogitations by the custom-house rogues laying hold of my mule's head, as it was passing through the gate of Orihuela: and bribing them with a peseta, I trotted on to the posada, where I bespoke a puchero, and then sallied out of the inn.

As I walked leisurely along one of the streets of this beautiful city, a window-sash was

suddenly thrown open, and I heard my own name, “Pedro! señor Pedro!” pretty loudly pronounced in a female voice, the tone of which I thought was familiar to me. Considerably surprised at this recognition of myself in a part where I had never before been, I stopped, turned my head, and casting my eyes upwards in the direction from which the sound proceeded, I caught a glimpse of a pair of sparkling eyes, and a profusion of dark tresses, just retreating from the balcony of a very handsome house; and while my eyes were yet fixed upon the window, the door was thrown open—and who but Maraquita darted into the street. “Ah, Señor Pedro,” said she, “Jesus Maria! and you are not drowned then,—and how did you escape? and how is it that you are here? and you are not the devil, nor a ghost, as some said? and so after all, the king’s advocate is right; but I long so much to

hear all about it, and I have so much to tell you," continued she as we went into the house; "and in the first place, you must know that I am married."

"Married!" said I,—all my golden dreams fading away; "why Maraquita, were we not betrothed?"

"What would you have had me to do," returned she; "you were sent to the tower of Tarifa, and every one knew that you jumped into the sea; and when the king's advocate afterwards said you had not jumped into the sea, and a great deal more, I did not believe him; and so—"

"But what," interrupted I, "is all this about the king's advocate?" for the repetition of the name of this official person, sounded rather unpleasantly in my ears.

"Have patience," said she, "and I will tell you all: the king's advocate, and your imprison-

ment and escape (for I see you have escaped), and my marriage, are all connected."

"Then pray indulge me," said I, "by explaining the connexion."

"Listen then," continued Maraquita: and she explained the enigma in these words.

"When the mayor of Tarifa refused to let me accompany you to prison, I was in despair; and when I afterwards learned that you had been sent to the round tower, nothing could equal the agony I suffered. Whether it was the sight of my grief that preyed upon my father, or the damp prison in which we were confined for some days, that injured his health, I am not able to say; but he fell ill, and my own private sorrows were forgotten in the greater affliction of seeing my kind old father drooping away, and in the sad prospect of being left alone in the world. The alcalde partly atoned for his barbarity to

you, in the kindness he showed to my father: he released us from prison, offered us an apartment in his own house, appointed the most skilful physicians to wait upon us, and did all in his power to alleviate the sufferings of my father, and to comfort me. My father was still living when the rumour reached me, and was soon after confirmed by the alcalde, that you had thrown yourself into the sea; and I think it was on the same evening, that I was left alone in the world. You will admit, that mine was a very destitute condition,—I had money, indeed,—but I had no protector: had I known that you were still living, no consideration upon earth could have prevailed upon me to take the step; but a young person scarcely twenty, and with no protector, is dangerously situated; and so I thought it best to forget the past, and to—”

“ To accept the alcalde for a husband ! ”

“Yes,—to accept the alcalde for a husband; and a very good husband he makes me. I do just as I please,—and he does as I please also; and that is, perhaps, more than a younger husband might have done.”

“Well,” interrupted I, “what’s done can’t be undone; but you have not yet told me what all this has to do with the king’s advocate and my escape.”

“You must know,” resumed she, “that shortly after I was married, a circumstance occurred that made a great noise in Tarifa,—there was a woman imprisoned in one of the towers, for the murder of her husband; and a most incredible occurrence took place, such as threw the whole town into alarm: it was discovered that the woman had died in her cell, and a ghost was seen watching the dead body; and so the bishop, and a friar, and my husband, had many consultations

about this mysterious affair; and one evening my husband told me that he was going that night along with the friar, to exorcise the ghost, and to take the dead body of the woman out of the cell. I said to him, that I thought it a dangerous service, and begged he would send some other person; but he said it was his duty to go, and that besides, he should be effectually protected against all danger, by the relics which the bishop meant to entrust him with.

“ Next morning early, my husband was brought home more dead than alive; and all I could learn was, that the ghost had carried away the dead body, and had almost killed the friar, as well as my husband, with fear; and had not only proved too strong for the relics, but had carried them off, as well as the friar’s habit; and the ghost and the dead woman were afterwards seen by the sentinels, walking along the mole

together. Most people said it was the devil who was carrying away the soul of the murderer; and that therefore, it was no wonder he had proved an overmatch for the friar and my husband: but some doubted this, thinking that the devil dared not have meddled with the relics; and there were some also, who seemed to think a trick had been played, and who laughed at the idea of the devil carrying away a body as well as a soul—or of a ghost carrying away either the one or the other; and among these, was the king's advocate, before whom an account of the whole affair had been laid, and who determined to investigate the matter—which was considered of some importance, as the relics which were missing, were valuable; and my husband was thought to be responsible for them. Accordingly, the king's advocate examined the towers and the cells, and strictly interrogated the friar

and my husband, and even the bishop himself; and at last he gave it as his opinion, that neither ghost nor devil had any hand in what had happened; but that the person confined in the opposite tower, and who was believed to have thrown himself into the sea, had contrived to cross by the chain (which he admitted was next to a miracle), and that he had personated a ghost; and besides carrying away the woman, who was no more dead than he was himself, had also carried off the relics, and the friar's habit, as well as a sabre from one of the sentinels.

“ This was the opinion of the king's advocate ; but scarcely any one gave credit to him : yet so great was his influence, that my husband was dismissed from the office of *alcalde*,—which was thought very unjust by most persons, as nobody could see any good reason why an *alcalde* should lose his office because he was no match for ghosts

and devils. But now that I have seen you, I find that the king's advocate was in the right;—and pray tell if it be really all just as he said; and, in the first place, tell me what you did with the woman you carried away with you? was she young! and handsome!—but did she not murder her husband?” and I was just beginning a reply to this interrogatory, when a loud knock at the gate announced the arrival of Maraquita's husband, the former alcalde of Tarifa!

Now when I considered that this was the very man who had pronounced me guilty of the murder of the captain trader, and who sent me to the round tower—and who had been deprived, through my adroitness, of the high office of alcalde of Tarifa—what had I to expect, if his belief in the devil should give way before the evidence of his eyes,—and he should recognise in me the very individual who, in his judgment,

was a robber and murderer, and who had set his authority at nought. These thoughts passing rapidly through my mind, I said to Maraquita, “ I confess I cannot help feeling some uneasiness at the approach of the former alcalde of Tarifa,—for, unless he be the most forgiving man in the world, he will scarcely pardon the trick I put upon him, should he recognise me.”

“ Then it is really true that you personated a ghost, and terrified my husband almost out of his wits ! Keep your secret, my friend,” continued she. “ Do you suppose that my husband is so simple as to find out a trick that would prove the king’s advocate to be in the right ? Oh, no ! it is no dishonour to have been overcome by the powers of darkness, as I have often heard him say ; so you may make yourself easy, for he would rather swear that the ghost had reappeared, than that there never had been a ghost

at all:" and while Maraquita was still speaking, in stepped the alcalde.—“ This,” said his wife, as he entered the room, “ is a gentleman with whom I was formerly acquainted, and who has done us the honour to call.”

The alcalde started as if he had seen an apparition; but quickly recovering himself, it was plain that his belief in the encounter with the powers of darkness, was too strong to be weakened by evidence of any kind: “ Sir,” said he, “ you will comprehend the momentary embarrassment I showed in meeting you, when I tell you the reason of it. When I had the honour to be alcalde of Tarifa, a rascal was brought before me, charged with an atrocious murder and robbery; he was convicted, and sent to the round tower; and were it not well known that he leaped from the summit into the sea, a distance of two hundred feet, I should have believed you

to be the same person,—so wonderful is the resemblance you bear to him.”

“ Sir,” said I, “ you have said you had once the honour to be alcalde of Tarifa; are you indeed that individual, against whose unjust removal from office all Spain exclaims,—he who so long filled the civic chair with so much dignity,—and who was removed from his high office, because he was worsted in an unequal combat against ten devils,—as I have heard,—and the ghosts of all the murderers who were ever confined in the towers of Tarifa?”

“ You do me too much honour,” returned he; “ for I am indeed the individual to whom you allude, though your version of the story is in some degree exaggerated: I rejoice to hear, that Spain does me justice. Yes, sir, whatever falsehoods the envious may invent, or the malignant may propagate, I did encounter, not ten

devils indeed, and the ghosts of many murderers,—but more devils and ghosts than any man could ever hope to vanquish; and surely, if the holy relics which I carried in one hand, were insufficient for victory, the staff of office which I carried in the other, could scarcely achieve a triumph. 'T was unjust, sir,—palpably unjust, to punish a man for being unable to cope with the devil and his satellites."

When I had first contemplated an encounter with the alcalde of 'Tarifa, I have confessed that I was not altogether free from alarm; but the conversation that had now passed between us, was quite sufficient to convince me, that whatever I might have had to fear from his malignity, I had a sufficient guarantee for my safety in his credulity; and at the same time that I had rapidly come to this comfortable conclusion, I came to another—which was, that as

some compensation for all that I had suffered through him,—the loss of my four thousand crowns, my imprisonment in the tower, and all the dangers and difficulties that had since beset me, I was entitled to the pleasure of some little retaliation. I plainly saw too, that Maraquita despised her husband—that she had been tempted by the honour of being the wife of an alcalde; and that she would willingly humour any jest, that should leave us to talk over old stories by ourselves. So therefore, when the alcalde had finished his reply in the manner above recorded, I said, “ Señor Alcalde, I am acquainted with a story so similar in many respects to yours, that if you will give me leave, I will do myself the honour of relating it;” and the alcalde expressing the greatest anxiety to be made acquainted with a story resembling his own, I spoke as follows:—

“ It happened in former days, that in one of the kingdoms of the world, a corrupt alcalde ruled over a certain city ; and one day, while he continued to exercise the functions of his high office, a man was brought before him charged with a certain murder and robbery. Now the alcalde of that city, without giving heed to the words of witnesses who accompanied him, and who knew that the man was not guilty of the crime laid to his charge, and perceiving also, that if the man were condemned, some part of his gold might find its way into his own pocket—the corrupt alcalde, I say, blinded to the truth by this evil thought, cast the innocent man into a strong prison by the sea shore. Here the unfortunate man continued some time in captivity; till at length, finding life insupportable, and saying, ‘at the door of the corrupt judge I scatter my blood,’ he leaped into the sea and

was drowned. You perceive," said I, interrupting my narrative for a moment, "that this latter incident strongly resembles your story."

"There is doubtless a resemblance," said he, while his countenance evidently showed, that the resemblance was by no means agreeable to him.

"Oh, but you shall hear," continued I, "how much stronger it becomes. I was saying then, that this unfortunate man leaped into the sea and was drowned. Now, as the story goes (for you must keep in remembrance that it is but a story—and may be true, or may be false), but, as the story goes, the words spoken by the injured man as he leaped into the sea, laying his blood at the door of the corrupt judge, who was in truth no other than his murderer, did not pass from him unheard: it is said that the devil, who is always on the watch for any thing that may

prove his title to a human soul, pricked up his ears when he heard so clear an accusation, and resolved to lose no time in making good his claim, which, having just then other business upon his hands, he was forced to do in the following manner :

“ In the same prison in which the unfortunate man had been confined, there was also a woman accused of having murdered her husband ; and the devil, perceiving that the woman was approaching her latter end, and fearing that the counsel of a confessor, who visited her cell, might disappoint him of his property, determined to run no hazard, but at once to take up his residence in the woman’s cell,—which he accordingly did ; and thus, most effectually frightened away the confessor, till the death of the woman made him sure of his property. You perceive,” said I, again pausing in my

narrative, “ that this is a very curious history ; and you shall presently hear, how the devil in looking after the soul of the woman, had not forgotten his claim to that of the alcalde. Well, the story goes thus : the confessor told the bishop what he had seen, and the bishop told the alcalde, who little suspected what the devil was after, and many consultations they had among themselves, as to what ought to be done in so extraordinary an emergency. The bishop wished to shove the business upon the alcalde, the alcalde upon the priest, and the priest upon the bishop ; but it was at length determined, that the confessor and the alcalde, each provided with a box of relics, should go to the prison and vanquish the devil, or whatever else it might be : and accordingly the alcalde, and the confessor—the former with a box of relics in one hand, and his staff of office in the other (which

by the by, is a strong point of resemblance between your story and this); and the latter, with another box of relics and a breviary, and accompanied by two men bearing a coffin for the woman, proceeded to the prison. Now, as the story says, the devil was mightily pleased at all this; because the alcalde was in fact jumping into his mouth, and he knew that at the same time he carried off the woman, he could set his mark upon the alcalde, who, had he known what was plotting, would no doubt have kept out of the way;—but,” said I, “blood, Mr. Alcalde, will have blood; and the devil knew his business, and was resolved to have what was his due; but now listen to what is coming. The alcalde and his attendants reached the door of the cell, and after a few prayers, the door was thrown open; but the devil perceiving this to be his time, and before the exorcism had commenced, advanced

from the middle of the floor, where he stood, and the alcalde, and the confessor, and the coffin-bearers fled from the encounter, and the devil passed out with the murderer!—but he did not forget to set his secret mark upon the corrupt alcalde, who lay insensible on the ground; and that he might be able to remind him of the meeting, and claim him when convenient, he took the box of relics,—which he dared not have done, if they had not been intrusted to one of his own. Is it not a truly laughable story?” said I, at the same time laughing heartily: “how cleverly the devil secured one prize, and took the means of identifying another; and although the alcalde of whom I speak, was a corrupt magistrate—and although the devil set his mark upon him—yet you perceive that there are some points of resemblance between my story and yours.”

While proceeding with my story, the agitation of the alcalde of Tarifa had been constantly increasing, until, when I arrived at this point, the strongest symptoms of fear were depicted on his countenance, and his teeth began to chatter in his head; and when he made answer to my interrogatory,—if it were not a laughable story?—that it was indeed exceedingly laughable; the most ghastly smile played upon his lips that ever before or since gave the lie to the words that issued from them.

“Oh! but,” said I, “the sequel is the best of it; for you shall hear how the devil afterwards met the alcalde, and how he made good his claim. It so happened, that the alcalde having subsequently to this affair been deprived of his office (as some versions of the story say), for being a corrupt judge; as others have it, on account of having allowed the devil to take away

the relics,—travelled along with his wife into a distant part of the kingdom, and stopped at a certain town celebrated for the consolations it offers to penitents. Now the devil, having never lost sight of the alcalde, notwithstanding the multiplicity of other business which he had upon his hands; and not much liking the place where the alcalde had taken up his abode, seeing that it so abounded with monks and other holy persons; and yet knowing that even there, or in any place excepting in Murcia,* he could claim his property, and being fearful perhaps that the alcalde might go thither, determined to lose no time in making good his claim.

“Now it happened, that one afternoon, about

* In the tower of the cathedral of Murcia, there was formerly a sanctuary for criminals of all kinds; and it would appear from the text, that this sanctuary was a protection against stronger claims than those of human justice.

this time it might be, when the wife of the alcalde was enjoying the air at her window, her husband being from home for a short space, she perceived a person loitering near, whom she recognised as an acquaintance, and invited within; and after they had sat a little while together, the alcalde returned, and he being introduced to the stranger, received him with great courtesy; and a conversation soon commenced between them, in which the mayor related to the stranger how he had formerly encountered the powers of darkness,—and upon this the stranger, taking up the conversation, began to tell the alcalde a story of another alcalde—who had once encountered the archfiend, and upon whom the archfiend had set his mark, and how that he afterwards claimed him; and who do you think,” said I, drawing my chair nearer to the alcalde of Tarifa, “this stranger turned out to be?”

The alcalde trembled from head to foot, and looked as if he would shrink into nothing if he could; and as well as extreme terror would permit, he answered in a tremulous and scarcely audible voice, "I know not."

"Nay, but guess," said I; "'t is a most excellent jest." But the alcalde making no reply, I continued, "'t was a marvellous good jest for the stranger, who was—you may surmise who—but no jest for the alcalde; for the stranger, thinking he had counterfeited long enough, put his hand into his pocket, as I might do in this way, and pulling out the identical title deeds of his property (the said box of relics), and drawing still closer to the corrupt alcalde, and extending his arms, the devil said ——:" but I had no occasion to proceed farther, for no sooner had I displayed the box, and begun to draw closer to the alcalde, than he, nerved with the terror of being the

next moment in the clutch of the great enemy, made one spring to the door, and another to the foot of the staircase; and, doubtless, before many minutes had elapsed, the conscience-stricken alcalde was on his road to Murcia, where the devil had told him he should be safe: and thus the alcalde of Tarifa was got rid of for that day.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL GAIN MUCH INSIGHT INTO
THE SHIFTS OF A NEEDY CABALLERO.

IF I mistake not, I have already recorded the resolution I took, after my succession to the smugglers' gold, to travel in future as a Caballero,—rather as one seeking pleasure than fortune; though this determination was accompanied by another, that my apparent pursuit of the one, should not prevent a sharp sight after the other: with this compound resolution, I was jogging on the road between Orihuela and Murcia, a few days after the adventure last detailed, upon my own mule, which I had made purchase of be-

fore setting out; and pleasing myself with the reflection, that the last few days had brought an accession to my purse, of four thousand crowns; but it is necessary that I should explain how my fortune had nearly doubled itself since leaving Alicante.

The alcalde of Tarifa, when he took his departure for Murcia in the sudden manner above related, had been too strongly impressed with the necessity of a retreat, to allow him to bestow a thought upon his strong box,—in which were deposited some seven or eight hundred pieces of eight,—his own fortune; as well as five or six times that amount,—the fortune of Maraquita. Now, the wife of the alcalde of Tarifa,—whatever her faults may have been,—was strictly honest; and when she resolved (whether from the unaided movements of her own will, or by the command of her confessor,

I know not) to follow her husband to Murcia, as in duty bound, she at the same time resolved to make me amends for the separation, and to repay in more solid coin than a good jest, the debt due to me by the alcalde; and so, taking me along with her, she opened her husband's strong box, and counted me out five hundred pieces of eight, from the store which belonged to him; and thus it was that I found reason to congratulate myself upon the state of my purse, as I leisurely journeyed towards Murcia. But before proceeding farther, I must inform the reader why my mule's head was turned in that direction; because it might otherwise be supposed, that I entertained hopes of a second conference with Maraquita.

I was in quest of pleasure and fortune,—and where, among the cities of the south, could these be found, unless in Seville, or in Cadiz?

But the former of these cities was the scene of that affair in which Andrades was sent out of the world, and the other had witnessed the tragical end of the two artists; and neither the one nor the other therefore, was well suited for my designs. And besides, a Caballero, with well nigh ten thousand crowns in his purse, could not rest satisfied without partaking in the diversions of the capital,—of which I had often heard it said, that one might there see something new every day in the year. I had resolved, therefore, that I would visit Madrid, and perhaps take the wealthy city of Toledo in my way,—trusting that in one or other of them something might occur, by which I might be able to turn my experience, and knowledge of the world, to a better account than I had hitherto done: and meditating upon my present condition and future plans, I found myself en-

tering the wide avenue that leads into Murcia; in which city I resolved to remain only so long as might enable me to make purchase of another mule, and to hire a servant, in order that I might journey in a becoming manner towards the capital.

Murcia, although the choicest city in Spain for devout Catholics, or for oppressed consciences, is the worst and least inviting of all cities to a Caballero in quest of diversion or adventure. Nowhere are the mats on the floors of the churches so plentiful,—nowhere do the altars attract so many kneelers,—nowhere are indulgences so numerous; so much so, that it would be no difficult matter for any one dwelling in this city,—short of a heretic,—to pray himself out of purgatory during his life-time. But I was as yet more intent upon such things as bring one into purgatory, than upon praying

myself out of it; and not caring to remain in Murcia till the carnival, when as I was told, there as elsewhere, the *canto amoroso* is louder than the canticle, I sallied forth from the posada, intent upon making choice of a mule, and upon picking up such a trusty servant as my occasions required.

Loitering in the Plaza Real, I was accosted by a Caballero whose thread-bare cloak carefully folded round him, gave suspicion of a still more meagre condition of the under garments, and whose lank visage seemed to announce, that notwithstanding the proverb, "*Llueva, o no llueva, trigo en Murcia,*" (rain or no rain, there is corn in Murcia), but a scanty portion found its way in that quarter.

"Señor," said the starved-looking Caballero, "I perceive that you are a stranger in this city, probably arrived from some distant place, to

take part in the diversions of the approaching carnival. It is possible therefore, that you may never have heard of Don Antonio de Saboya."

I replied, that being from the distant province of Andalusia, I had indeed never heard mention of that Caballero.

"It is Don Antonio de Saboya," replied he, "who no desires the happiness of your acquaintance. Such fare as the *posadas* in this city afford, is not fitted for a Caballero of your consideration,—pray then do me the favour to accompany me to my house, which is hard by,—and where, a stew worthy of a canon is now almost ready to be served up."

"Señor," said I, "my time is at present at my own disposal,—and I am ready to make you its master. It is true indeed, that I have but just ordered a *puchero* at the *posada de la Caridad*; but I cannot refuse to accept the

civility of so courteous a Caballero ;” and Don Antonio de Saboya, uttering a profusion of thanks for my condescension, led the way out of the Plaza Real, into a narrow and obscure street,—saying at the same time, “the bustle of the Plaza, or the great streets, does not suit my taste ; I prefer retirement ; and must therefore crave your pardon for the necessity of conducting a Caballero of your condition through so mean a quarter of the city.”

For my part, although I could not perceive that great advantages were likely to result from a connexion with a Caballero owning so threadbare a cloak, nor anticipated much from the promised stew, I was yet willing to accept of any variety in so monotonous a city as Murcia ; and accompanied my companion, who continued to lead me through a variety of obscure streets, apparently towards the outskirts of the city. We

did not proceed, however, altogether in silence. “This,” said the Caballero, pausing a moment, as we passed a low shop, from which issued an intolerable stench of garlic—“This is the well-known, and deservedly esteemed, cookshop of Berbedel; all strangers, who visit Murcia, make trial of his sausages.” “Here,” said the Caballero, at another door where he paused, “lives Mendizabal, whose *pan candial* is the pride of Spain,—such bread, señor, is nowhere to be found but in Murcia; look at its whiteness; and the odour of it is a perfect nosegay.” “This,” said the Caballero, as we passed the gate of an indifferent-looking posada, “is the posada de la Cruz, the most celebrated in the whole province for the excellence of its ollas: ’t is, I believe, at this very hour they are ready; doubtless the savour reaches your nose, as it does mine. If, señor, you have any desire to taste the best olla in Spain, here is the very spot.”

“I have no reason,” said I, “to doubt the excellence of the stew which your courteous attention forces upon me; another day I may make trial of the olla of which you speak so highly.”

“No doubt,” returned the Caballero, “you will be satisfied with the entertainment that awaits you; for to let you into a secret, I outbid the Archbishop of Carthagená by a round number of duros, and so secured the best cook in the province;” and at this point in the conversation, my companion halted at the door of an old dilapidated-looking house, in one of the most obscure streets, saying, “This, señor, is my house; quiet, as you perceive; where I am able to enjoy myself with my friends, without disturbance of any kind: ah! señor, I cannot sufficiently gratulate myself upon my good fortune in having met so worthy a Caballero, to

whom I have it in my power to offer the hospitalities of my house, which is now always at your disposal;" and, with these words, my companion applied his hand with effect to the knocker, which echoed through the house as if the sound were returned from bare walls. No one replying to the summons, "Battisto," said the Caballero, "is, no doubt, engrossed in the preparation of the stew, and Juan is either placing the wines in the *bucaro*, or preparing the *brasero*, for the weather is somewhat chilly; indeed, I have no difficulty in smelling the charcoal."

"Deaf rogues!" exclaimed the Caballero, as a second time he made the house resound with the noise of the knocker; "this delay is intolerable: señor, a thousand apologies for the negligence of these lazy vagabonds; but they shall hear, if I have any strength left in my arm;"

and a third time the master of the house applied his hand with such vigour to the knocker, that no deafness of any thing living could excuse a longer delay.

“Ah, unhappy man that I am,” said the Caballero, “never before had master such graceless servants!—oh, the ungrateful rascals; alas! I suspect the truth. My too great liberality stuffs their pockets with pesetas; and they, regardless of so kind a master and his comforts, take advantage of my absence, and go into the city to spend them. Having somewhat outstaid my usual hour, they have doubtless imagined that I had taken the chair which is always left for me at the tables of the *Intendente* and the *Corregidor*. It is impossible, señor, that you can excuse this misfortune. Ah! the rogues,—the thankless rogues!”

For my part, I had found no difficulty in

coming to the conclusion, that I had met with one of those needy Caballeros who show a well-brushed cloak and hat, and clean gloves, on the Alameda and at mass ; but whose larder consists of some strings of garlic, and who contrive now and then, by some little ingenious invention, to partake an olla with a stranger.

“ Señor,” said I, “ I willingly accept your apologies ; I have known something myself of the ingratitude of those whom one feeds and pampers. Take my advice, Señor de Saboya, and dismiss both Battisto and Juan, notwithstanding the excellence of their cookery ; meanwhile, favour me with your company to the posada de la Caridad ; if indeed, after such dainties as you are doubtless accustomed to, you can accommodate your appetite to so homely a dish as a puchero ; and as for your stew, señor, the savour of which I can easily perceive through

the door, it will eat admirably cold; and no doubt before supper time, you will be able to gain admittance into your house."

From the manner in which I delivered myself, the Caballero could easily perceive that I saw through the jest; and he replied, "Possibly Don Antonio de Saboya may be able to do justice to the puchero with which you design to treat him, notwithstanding the rich meats to which he has been accustomed; for although it be true that the cookery in the posadas in this city is indifferent, I have heard that the pucheros in the posada de la Caridad are an exception; and as for those rogues Battisto and Juan, I will undoubtedly dismiss them my service:" and so turning away from the house of the Caballero, we re-traversed most of the streets by which we had already passed; but without any remark by Don Antonio as to the excellence of the cook-

shops; and soon reached the posada de la Caridad, where the puchero and some little adjuncts were speedily placed before us. "Truly," said the fastidious Don Antonio, when meat and *garbanzos* had vanished before his appetite, "the pucheros in this posada are an exception, as I said; scarcely, señor, have we any cause to regret the absence of the stew."

"Señor de Saboya," said I, "it has afforded me much pleasure to have had the happiness of dividing my puchero with so ingenious a Caballero as yourself; but tell me one thing—Does it frequently happen that these intolerable rogues Battisto and Juan thus take advantage of their master's generosity, and have the insolence to prevent him from exercising his well-known hospitality?"

"Ah! señor," replied Don Antonio, "I perceive that your experience of the world has

enabled you to see through my frolic; and that you doubted the excellence of a stew to be provided by a Caballero wearing a thread-bare cloak."

"Come," said I, "let not the discovery, which at all events does credit to thy ingenuity, prevent our better acquaintance; thou shalt sup with me here, and so save thy stew to breakfast; and thou shalt in return, fill up the interval, by giving me some account of thyself,—for I am well persuaded thy life has not been barren of adventure."

"In truth," replied Don Antonio, "it will scarcely repay your attention, much less your puchero, or this excellent bottle of *beni-carlo*, which by the by gets somewhat low; nevertheless I will willingly oblige a Caballero, who has had the goodness to take my jest in such good part;" and Don Antonio accordingly spoke

as follows:—‘ My father was Don Antonio de Saboya; and my grandfather before him, was Don Antonio de Saboya. My inheritance consisted in the distinction of Don, a suit of clothes, and a piece of land worth one hundred crowns a year; and I omitted to add, a tolerable figure, and an inclination to make the most of it. Notwithstanding, however, it has never put any thing in my pocket,—it has gained me indeed the favourable opinion of the ladies, and not unfrequently something beyond this; but the reputation and privileges of a *Cortejo* cost some pesetas; and a Caballero who would enjoy these upon a hundred crowns a year, must endeavour to prefer bread and onion to a puchero; and a glass of water to a cup of chocolate—tastes, somewhat difficult of acquirement. It was once indeed in my power to have secured an olla for life, by becoming the husband of the only child

of a rich silk-merchant of this city—a señorita not without attractions, and who was captivated perhaps as much by my title as my figure: but it was made a condition, that I should assist my father-in-law in his trade—a thing wholly out of the question, when proposed to a Caballero who was seen at *tertulias* of this marquesa, and that baronesa,—and so the señorita found another husband; and I continued to enjoy my dignity, and to practise myself in my taste for onions and abstinence.”

Just as Don Antonio had reached this point in his narrative, he suddenly stopped—for at that moment, the tongues of all the bells of the convents and churches of Murcia were let loose. “Ah! señor,” exclaimed the Caballero, at the same time rising from his seat, “forgive this interruption; it is *oracion*,* and here I must

* I took care to be on the Paseo before sunset, that I

needs break off my narrative. Don Antonio de Saboya would be ruined for ever if he were not seen on the Paseo; the walks are doubtless already crowded,—and never once since I came to my inheritance, have I neglected to present myself on the Paseo. It is necessary to my reputation; and — ah! señor,” continued Don Antonio, after a short pause, “it is in your power to make me rich for life,—and without impoverishing yourself.”

“How, Señor de Saboya,” said I, “can that be made to appear?”

might witness the impressive ceremony called *oracion*, now banished from Madrid and the northern parts of Spain, and found only in the provinces last occupied by the Moors. Nothing can be more imposing than this usage. At the same instant that every church and convent bell peals forth the signal for prayer, motion and conversation are suspended; and the whole stands still; every head is uncovered; the laugh and the jest are silent; and a monotonous hum of prayer rises from the crowd: but this expression of devotion lasts but a moment; the next it is past; heads are covered,—every one turns to his neighbour, and says, *buenas noches*, and the multitude moves on.

“In this way,” returned the Caballero: “a thread-bare cloak, señor, must sooner or later prove the ruin of any man. The post of Cortejo to the Duquesa de Jura Real is now vacant, and I am one of the many competitors for that lady’s favour: once installed into that post, and fifty doors would be thrown open to me. I see in it a perspective of pucheros for a year to come; but with a thread-bare cloak, my advancement is impossible.”

“And how, señor de Saboya,” said I, “can I provide thee with a cloak, without being the value of a cloak the poorer?”

“If but for one hour,” replied the Caballero, “the cloak upon your shoulders were transferred to mine, and that hat placed upon my head, my fortune would be made: ’t is nothing but this *vieja* that stands in the way of my preferment.”

“But,” said I, “this little trick, if it gained

thee the post which thou desirest, could not maintain thee in it; for if a new cloak and hat won the favour of the Duquesa to-night, thy own vieja would lose it thee to-morrow."

"To-morrow," returned the Caballero, "I should be in possession of a cloak such as I would borrow. A thread-bare cloak bespeaks a leaky purse,—but with yours, all the merchants in Murcia would vie in their offers to serve me."

I could not find in my heart to refuse the Caballero: my own experience told me that his expectations were well founded, and I resolved not to disappoint them; and I confess indeed, that in the success of Don Antonio, were founded my only hopes of ever again seeing my own apparel. "Señor," said I, "take my cloak and hat, and hasten to the Paseo; make the most of thy opportunity,—for it may be a long while

before such another occur again,”—and Don Antonio throwing my cloak over his shoulders, with a profusion of acknowledgments, and placing my hat upon his head, strutted out of the posada with an air that might have become their owner, and hastened to secure the favour of the Duquesa, and the confidence of the cloth Merchant.

Two hours after, Don Antonio returned: “the post is mine,” said he—“the Duquesa was unable to hold out a moment; and to-morrow morning, three cloaks and hats, each as good as these, will be in my possession; there was not a fan on the Paseo that was not shaken at me; and as for the cloth merchants, your cloak worked miracles among them. I shall be able to dispense with the services of Battisto and Juan for months to come; a Caballero with a new suit, need never want a puchero.”

Whether all the expectations of Don Antonio de Saboya were realised, is more than I am able to tell,—and how long the reputation of being cortejo to a duchess, and of possessing three of the best suits in Murcia enabled him to dispense with the services of Battisto and Juan, can only be matter of conjecture, for my acquaintance with Don Antonio terminated the same evening; and the conclusion of his narrative containing no proof of ingenuity greater than what I have related, I have allowed it to slip from my memory.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
MOST EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE YET RELATED IN
THIS BOOK.

THE evening after my adventure with Don Antonio, which had prevented me from effecting my intention of providing myself with a mule and a servant, I again left the posada; and passing into that suburb which lies along the left bank of the river Segura, I observed a crowd of persons collected around a man who was lying upon the ground motionless; and willing to satisfy myself as to the cause of what I saw, I inquired of a by-stander what had happened?

“’Tis only one man who has killed another!” said he.

“And has the murderer been seized?” demanded I.

“That’s another affair,” said he, and will depend upon the *escrivanos*.”

Making my way through the crowd, no one of whom seemed to show much interest or concern in what had taken place, I saw that one man lay dead upon the ground; and that another (he who had done the murder) stood by, with the air of a man who exulted in what he had done, and holding his knife yet in his hand.

“Excuse me, señor,” said a man walking towards me, who by his roguish look I at once knew to be an *escrivano*, “I presume you are a relation—brother, perhaps, to the murdered man: I will undertake that this villain shall be hanged within one week, provided you consider my

services worth engaging;" and adding, in a whisper, "a paltry fifteen hundred reals will satisfy me."

"I am not in any way interested in the dead man," said I, "except indeed—"

"Ah! that's another thing," said the escrivano, "quite another thing; the Caballero then who has had the misfortune to send this man (no doubt a rogue) out of the world, is related to your Grace: well, it is a more difficult case; but I will nevertheless undertake that the Caballero shall be alive this day twelve months, provided the desire you no doubt feel to save your relation from the gallows, prompts you to engage my good offices—only three thousand reals," added he, in an under tone: "be assured señor, there is not an escrivano in Murcia has saved so many caballeros from the gallows as I have."

“Friend,” said I, “I am related neither to the one man nor to the other, and am only a spectator like the other gentlemen, who, like myself, seem to be assembled here from curiosity. I know nothing of the fray; if this man deserves to be hanged, I would not give a real to save him from the gallows.”

While I spoke with the *escrivano*, the man who had done the murder kept his eyes fixed upon me,—and the flushed look of exultation, which his countenance at first showed, gradually assumed an expression of greater softness, but in which were mingled traces of sorrowful and even agonizing recollections; and when I said, that if he deserved to be hanged I would not give a real to save him from the gallows, he stepped forward, and said, “And how much would you give to save a man from the gallows, who does not deserve to be hanged?”

“My friend,” replied I, “the question scarcely needs an answer, “since it will hardly apply to your own case, who appear to have this moment committed a murder.”

“And yet,” returned he, “if you were acquainted with the circumstances that led to what you naturally enough call murder, I am persuaded that you would answer the question by drawing out your purse, and giving to one of these rogues as much as would save me from the gallows; for although it be true enough that I killed this man, I did no more than what duty as well as inclination prompted me to.”

Now the events of my own life being fresh in my memory—and knowing, that although I had been instrumental in sending three men to their account, I was blameless of the murder of any of them—and indeed, in one at least of these cases, deserved commendation rather than

blame, I was forced to admit to myself, that this man might possibly be blameless even as I was; and that before condemning him, I ought in justice to listen to his defence. But while I was thus retracing in my own mind some of the events of my life, and had come to the resolution to save the man from the gallows, if he could prove a just title to be saved, and if this could be done at so small an expense as three thousand reals, I discovered that my humanity was not likely to be put to the test; for the *escrivanos*, seeing that nobody was so much interested in either the dead man or the man who killed him, as to give a *peseta* towards hanging the one or screening the other, and perceiving therefore that their services were not likely to be required, had walked away, leaving things to take their course; and the others who had been attracted to the

spot, seeing no one in authority present, and fearful of being implicated in the affair, slunk off one by one, so that by the time I had resolved in the manner above related, there were none left but the dead man and myself, and the man who killed him, standing by.

“Friend,” said I, “it is possible that what you say may be true; at all events, it is no part of your duty to wait for accusers; and there seems here to be no obstacle to your walking away in whatever direction you may think fit.”

“I thank you for your good intention,” said he; “I have reasons for desiring to live a little longer, and will therefore take your advice:” and we both turned down a narrow road that leads behind the hospital, and back to the city. “But,” continued I, “you will admit that appearances are always against a man who kills

another; and as it might not be prudent for me to be seen in suspicious company, you will permit me to wish you a clear escape and a good conscience.”

“Sir,” said the man, laying hold of my cloak, and speaking with the earnest and dignified air of one who thinks himself aggrieved, “my conscience is as clear of murder as yours; that man met his death justly at my hands; and as I have already said, you would blame me as little as my own conscience does, if you were acquainted with the events that have terminated in this manner.”

There was something in the expression of the man, that induced me to give credit to the bold assertion of his innocence; and feeling some curiosity to know the events that might justify a man in running his knife into another, I questioned him as to which way lay his road, and

whether he was not above entering into service; for that the next morning it was my intention to journey towards Castile, and that I was not yet provided.

“Your road shall be mine,” said he, “and I willingly engage myself in your service.”

“I shall leave this city,” said I, “at day-break: I will put thee upon a mule, and thou shalt accompany me, and as we journey along thou shalt tell me the history of this affair; meanwhile it will be best for thee to leave Murcia; wait for me two leagues on the road to Chinchilla, where I expect to find thee two hours after day-break, and this peseta will purchase a *gaspacho** for supper, and a bench in a venta till morning.”

“You will have no cause to repent your

* The *gaspacho* is the universal supper in hot weather; its ingredients are water, vinegar, oil, bread, and onion.

generosity," said the man;" and I freely make this vow, and call upon all the saints in heaven to ratify it,—that if, after you have heard my story, you shall say that the blood of the man whom you saw dead in the street, lies at my door, I will deliver myself up to the hands of the executioner." And here we parted,—my newly engaged servant taking the nearest road out of Murcia, and I returning to the posada.

The same evening, I made purchase of a strong mule, for which I paid a hundred and fifty crowns; and next morning at day-break I left Murcia, mounted upon one of the mules, with my money in a canvass bag fastened before me, and with a long gun and a good sabre slung by my side, and leading the other mule by the bridle, which was also furnished with similar weapons of defence. At the appointed spot I perceived my servant in waiting,—and having

mounted him upon the led mule, we set forward at a gentle trot.

This was the first journey I had ever made since leaving my native town, that could be called a journey of pleasure. In place of walking on foot, I had as good a mule under me as ever Caballero was astride of; and in place of serving myself or serving others, I had a servant of my own,—in place of running away from danger, I was going in pursuit of pleasure; and was incommoded by nothing but the weight of my money bag,—which, without making so articulate a jingle as might awaken the cupidity of others, was yet sufficiently metal-toned, as at every jerk of the mule, to sound very satisfactorily in my ears. I had never a very acute taste for the beauties of nature, and much must not therefore be expected from me in the way of description; but I was pleased to find, that

since the improvement that had taken place in my worldly condition, I received a sensible pleasure from looking upon the country through which I journeyed; and was sometimes even so much engaged by it, as to forget for a while the anticipated pleasures of the capital, and scarcely to heed the clank of my money bag.

“Now, friend,” said I, “for I do not yet know thy name,” at the same time reining in my mule, till my servant came up with me,—“there is nothing that I know of, to prevent thee from acquainting me with the particulars of thy connexion with the man who was killed yesterday; the road is here broad enough for two; I am in no haste,—so walk thy mule alongside of mine, and let me hear whether thou be’st indeed as innocent as thou say’st; and whether thou hast a right to boast of as clear a conscience as thy master: and Henrique (for such

was his name) gave me the following relation, as we journeyed slowly up the valley that lies between Molina and Ziezar.

THE AFFLICTING STORY OF THE VALENCIAN;

AND WHY HE KILLED HIS ENEMY IN THE
STREETS OF MURCIA.

“I WAS born at San Felipe, in the kingdom of Valencia; and was bred up to the profession of medicine. My father died without leaving me any patrimony; and my mother being also dead, my maternal uncle, who was a physician, took me into his house, and treated me as his son. Under his tuition, I learned the knowledge and treatment of diseases; and became, I may say, more than usually skilled in the properties of the medicinal plants with which all Valencia, but particularly the neighbourhood of San Felipe, so plentifully abounds.

“Don Montera,—which was the name of my uncle,—had one child named Inez, and we early became attached to each other. I have no intention of painting the progress of our passion: we were playmates before we were lovers,—and loved, even while we were yet children. Her father, far from disapproving of what he could not but remark, falling sick, and feeling his end near approaching, resolved to trust his child to my protection; and before he breathed his last he joined our hands, and we were united. Two months after our union I left San Felipe, for the purpose of gathering, in the neighbourhood of Enguera, the medicinal herbs that were necessary for my profession; and my dear Inez, entreating that I would not leave her alone, I consented to take her along with me; and each mounted upon a mule, we set out, and soon reached the neighbourhood of Enguera.

“ Upon the second evening after leaving San Felipe, when I had finished the agreeable labours of the day, and while we were preparing to return to Enguera, the sun being then near setting, we found ourselves suddenly surrounded by banditti; who, regardless of the cries of Inez, and of my offer of a liberal ransom, carried us along with them into the heart of the sierra that lies between Enguera and Chinchilla: I will be as brief in my afflicting narrative as possible; I am only desirous of proving to you, that the blood of the wretch which was yesterday shed by my hand, has not half expiated his crime, and that more blood must yet be spilt before justice be appeased.

“ When they had carried us into their cavern, they bound me hand and foot, and laid me in such a position as that I might see the indignities they offered to my Inez. Gracious and

just God, I thank thee that my hand has been steeped in the blood of one; and grant me vengeance upon all!! I writhed in mental torture; I tried to wrench my fetters till my joints were dislocated; I cried and foamed with rage, and wept sometimes, and shut my eyes, that I might not see; and when they had laughed at my agony, and derided my impotent threats, and exhausted their brutality, they cast lots whose wife my Inez should be;—Just God! whose wife!—and she fell to the lot of Moralez, the wretch whose poor life is all that vengeance has yet been able to take; but he died unshriven and impenitent,—and eternal fires await him; and I sent him to his doom; I sent him,—ah! there's joy in that thought.

“ For days I never saw my Inez—she was in an inner chamber of the cavern; but her cries sometimes reached my ear. At length I was

loosed from my bonds, and forced to labour : and one day, when I had refused to perform some drudgery, three wretches tied me to a stake ; and while they were inflicting stripes, Inez, who had heard me mock them, contrived to unloose the fastenings that separated her from me,—and she rushed into my arms, which, with preternatural force I had freed from their bonds, to open and receive her. They tore her from my embrace ; and Moralez,—God give me strength to utter it, and to curse him,—Moralez threw her from him with ruffian violence, and she died. I dare not say how ; she died,—he killed her ; I saw her hair stream with blood,—ay, blood,—the blood of my Inez ! and I heard her last groan. I prayed an inward prayer for vengeance ; but I thanked God that she was dead, and beyond their reach. That hour I made a solemn vow, that I would live for vengeance ;

that to accomplish it, I would do violence to my nature; league myself with ruffians,—be a hypocrite,—fawn upon those whose hearts' blood I would lick,—cringe to those upon whom I would trample,—pretend forgiveness, nay friendship for those, to ensure whose everlasting torments, I would myself be content to forfeit heaven. All this I swore for vengeance' sake; and my vow is now approaching its accomplishment. Moralez is now one of the damned; and the rest are near their time.

“ When Inez was no more, I acted in conformity with my vow; I refused no drudgery,—I was implicitly obedient,—I strove to be useful,—I showed no animosity,—I told them they had done a wicked deed; but that we are commanded to be forgiving. They long suspected me, and watched me, as well they might; but my continued docility, and obedience, and calm speech,

at length worked upon their minds ; and about this time overhearing by accident a plan concocted by two of their number for betraying the gang, and reaping the reward, I made it known to the chief. The robbers confessed the truth of my information under the torture, and were strangled ; and I had thus the double satisfaction of exulting in the agony and death of two of these monsters, and of gaining the confidence of the rest of the gang.

“ I now affected a sympathy in their safety and good fortune ; and by and by, in their feelings and occupations : I jested with them of rapine and blood,—extolled a life of freedom and jeopardy,—joined them in their low ribaldry,—laughed at their gross and disgusting stories,—mingled in their drunken chorus,—extolled their courage,—applauded their inhumanity,—and revered their superstitions. I did more ; I

shared their unhallowed gains,—partook of the licentiousness that outrage, perhaps blood, had purchased; and was foremost in the sacrifices that were daily offered on the altars of practical vice and depravity. And at length, I made friends and confidants of all. Ah! the moments of ecstasy and exultation that were mine; not because I quaffed wine, and sacrificed to sin,—no! I hated their orgies,—revolted at their licentiousness,—and shuddered, even while I outdid them in horrid mirth and unholy deeds. But I exulted in my hopes of revenge, and brooded over my projects for executing it. The dying groan of my Inez was ever in my ear; the indignities of the ruffian crew were ever present to me; and time, that usually weakens our resolves, and stills our passions, only served to increase my desire of vengeance, as the hour of its triumph seemed to approach.

“ I had now gained the last, and most important object. I was trusted; looked up to, and even spoken of as the successor of Don José. I was foremost in their expeditions, and planned as well as executed them; and was careful only to screen my life, that it might be reserved for its destined purpose. It was in my power once, to have sold the gang; but it did not suit my notions of revenge to see—only to see, those whom I hated, die—shriven too, and repentant; to endure a moment’s struggle, and be admitted into heaven, through the poor ordeal of purgatory. No ! my victims must know the hand that strikes the death-blow, and see the exulting smile that mocks the dying pang, and hear the terrific word ‘vengeance,’ ring in their ears, and pass from the mockery of the avenger, into the power of a stronger,—and into an eternity—ay ! an eternity of punishment. I

might at another time, have sent them all to their doom but one : a cask full of gunpowder was in the cavern, and I could have fired it, and told them while the train was fired, that my revenge was at hand ; but one was absent, and that one was Moralez, without whose blood my vengeance would have been incomplete—how incomplete !! and now my story draws near the present hour.

“ It is a week this day, since Moralez was despatched to Murcia, to purchase secretly some fire arms, with instructions to return in three days ; the three days elapsed, and he had not returned, and after another day his comrades began to be uneasy, lest he had proved traitor ; and yet another day passing without any tidings of Moralez, it was resolved to despatch one of the band to Murcia, that he might if possible discover whether we were in danger, and obtain

some clue to the absence of Moralez. I was pitched upon for this service; and my heart bounded within me, for I saw that the hour of vengeance had arrived.

“ Two days ago, I left the band, to proceed to Murcia; and my design was already formed. You must know, that in these parts there grows a certain herb, whose virtues were well known to me at San Felipe. A small portion of it, taken internally, deprives the person who has swallowed the decoction of muscular power: he retains his senses and his intellect, because it does not act upon the nerves or brain; but he loses the power of motion, and remains as still and helpless as a sleeping man: it creates in fact, a temporary palsy. This herb grows in sufficient quantities in different parts of this province; and by means of it, I proposed to execute my scheme of vengeance and justice.

“ While Moralez remained with the band, this was impossible,—because, to him belonged the charge of cooking; but in his absence, this charge devolved upon me; and therefore, when it was determined that I should go in search of Moralez, I saw that my meditated and long deferred revenge was on the eve of its accomplishment. Moralez, I resolved, should never return to the band; for he would in that case, return to his duties, and pluck my revenge out of my hand. I mentally doomed him to the death he met,—too mild indeed for his deserts; but I knew that he died unshriven and impenitent.

“ I left the band before day-break; and knowing well in what spots the herb I stood in need of was to be found, I soon gathered a sufficient quantity of it to answer my purpose, and proceeded to Murcia; taking care to make such inquiries by the way as might secure me against

the possibility of missing my first victim. I knew to what place he would resort in Murcia; and there I learned, that he had that moment gone towards the posada de la Concepcion, and purposed leaving Murcia the same night. I overtook him, and walked with him towards the suburb; but without, at that time, meditating the deed which I had resolved should be deferred till we were on our return from Murcia. Men's determinations are, however, sometimes influenced by small things: a female, young, and not without attraction, passing by; Moralez, uttering some coarse jest, glanced at her as she passed—and in that glance, I remembered the look he had dared to raise towards my spotless Inez. A thousand recollections rushed to my memory; the monster who had—why work myself into frenzy?—he walked by my side; and I plunged my knife in his bosom,—he died too

soon! yet I think he saw me smile, and heard my whisper: but 't is immaterial; his punishment is but begun, and will end—never! And now,” said the unfortunate physician of San Felipe, suddenly halting his mule and turning to me, “now that you have heard the history of my connexion with that man, will you admit that I had a right to act as I did, and that conscience need not accuse me?”

“His punishment, at least in this world,” said I, “was slight,—and no one can be surprised that your hand should inflict it; but your story is not yet finished, have you executed the farther revenge you hinted at?”

“That is yet to come,” replied Henrique; “and you, if you please, may witness it.”

This was not an intimation to put me quite at my ease; and my companion, no doubt observing some hesitation in my air, said, “you have

no cause for alarm,—and you will be surprised to learn, that I am your companion to-day for no other reason than to protect you. At the moment I saw you approach the spot where I stood, I observed a resemblance betwixt you and her who is no more ; I felt a movement of kindness,—and learning from yourself, your intention of travelling by Chinchilla, I resolved to stand your friend, and save you from the merciless clutches of the band, which I knew would this day be on the look out for my return, and who could not fail to intercept, and rob, and perhaps murder you : for that reason I closed with your offer to hire me as your servant. It is in that range of hills which you perceive about two leagues to the right, where our concealment is ; and I every moment expect to see some of our number appear. Fear nothing ; I will bring you in, as a rich prize I

have captured: my plan of vengeance cannot fail; and in a few hours you shall be again on your road to Madrid.”

It was impossible that I could do otherwise than express my gratitude to my companion for his protection; though I am not ashamed to confess, that I would willingly have avoided the scene which I was likely to witness; but just at this moment, my cogitations and our farther conversation were cut short by the appearance of four men, who suddenly emerged from a thicket of algarobos.

“These,” said my companion, “are four of the band,—counterfeit some uneasiness, trust implicitly in me, and be assured you shall be protected from all danger or injury.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CONTINUATION OF MY ADVENTURE WITH THE VALENCIAN; AND THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS REVENGE, —FROM THE CONCLUSION OF WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN, HOW MUCH TRUTH THERE IS IN THE PROVERB WHICH SAYS—“IT IS AN ILL WIND THAT BLOWS NOBODY GOOD.”

“ALL’S safe,” said Henrique, as we approached each other; “and I have had rare good fortune; two hours ago, I overtook this rich merchant of Alicante, travelling with his servant, and laden with hard coin, (for it would appear that the clink of my money bag had not escaped the ears of my companion). The servant I despatched,—and left lying among the *palmitos*,*

* Dwarf palms, which in many places in Murcia form a thick underwood.

snug enough from observation ; and the master and his two mules—good ones they are—and his bags, which we shall by and by turn inside out, you see I've brought hither : he deserves good usage, for he'll enrich us all ; and besides what we shall gain now, he will pay a ransom of a hundred thousand reals at least."

While Henrique made this address, the men, who were even more ruffian-like than the smugglers, with whom it was once my fortune—good fortune, I may say—to encounter, stood grinning approving smiles.

"The mules, I'll warrant to be worth eight thousand reals," said one of the men.

"Jesus !" said another, lifting my money-bag from the saddle, "this is a rare prize ; I should know the chink of gold,—and if all this be gold, as I believe, why —"

"Gold !" said one.

“Gold is it!” said another,—each coming forward and shaking the bag.

“Let us open it,” said the man who had valued the mules.

“No,” said Henrique; “let’s have something like honour about us. I’ve charge of the merchant and his bag; and I’ll let no one touch it, till it be delivered to Don José.

“Well, well,” said they all, “that’s fair,—the captain will make an equal division:” and we then struck from the road, crossing the country directly towards the hills which Henrique had pointed out.

“And what news have you brought of Moralez?” said one of the men, as we went quickly forward.

“Oh, you’ll see him soon,” returned Henrique, casting a side glance at me, which I well understood: “in two or three hours, at most.”

“We ’ve missed him sadly,” said another ;
“and you too, since you left us,—there’s not a
cook amongst us all ; but we’ll have a rare good
puchero to-day, now that you have returned.”

“That you shall,” said Henrique ; and a
siesta after it,—so let’s make haste, for I’ve
eaten not a blessed morsel since I left Murcia.”

Soon after, we entered the deep channel of
a stream, at that time dry, winding into the
heart of a low range of hills ; the banks were
of gypsum,—high, and partially covered with
the Indian fig, which in some places formed a
thick matting.

“Here is our retreat,” said Henrique ; at the
same time diverging from the main channel into
a narrow tortuous ravine, apparently choaked
up with a thick underwood of aloe, and Indian
fig, and overhung by some old ilex trees ; and
creeping under the matted foliage as directed,

I soon found myself at the entrance of one of those spacious excavations which a few days' labour suffices to form, in the gypsum-rocks that extend over a great part of the province of Murcia.

We were welcomed with loud greetings by the remainder of the band within,—of whom I counted seven: and to Don José the chief, Henrique related nearly the same story that he had told to the four whom we met.

“Santa Maria!” said Don José, looking round among his comrades as he introduced two of his fingers into my bag and pulled out a gold piece, “this is an example for us all; a capture indeed! I declare you my successor upon the spot,” said he, striking Henrique upon the back,—and as he poured out the contents of my bag upon the ground, the ruffian faces of the robbers were lighted up with a ferocious glee,

and their dark eyes gleamed a wild delight, as in that dusky cavern their fire shot through the grisly eyebrows that overshadowed them.

“Body of me !” said Don José, dragging me by the arm to the mouth of the cavern, “this merchant’s face reminds me of the wench you pretended was your wife, Henrique,—shall we do with him as Moralez served her? ’t was a silly piece of work that; pity but this fellow were a woman, we’d take better care of him; I’d take her to wife myself: he’ll be safest underground,—what think ye, comrades?”

During this address, the robbers were too much occupied with the gold, to take notice of Henrique’s countenance, which was lighted up with the exulting smile of anticipated vengeance, mingled with the darkest lineaments of hatred. But he quickly resumed his self-possession; and said, “he has promised a ransom of a hundred

thousand reals,—we'll exact the double of it from him; no doubt he is rich enough to pay it, and we can at least keep him till we find whether the ransom be delivered. If we discover any evasion, it will be time enough then to put him out of sight."

While this discourse was going on, I had only one cause for anxiety. I felt confident in the protection and good intentions of Henrique, whose story I had no reason to doubt; and whose thirst for revenge, however unchristian, I felt to be natural, and was persuaded could in him be satiated by nothing less than the execution of the project which he meditated. It was only the possibility of a failure in this project that disturbed me; for this would, without doubt, be followed by the instant sacrifice of both of us. No exertion of mine, however, could extricate me from the danger that thus threatened

me; I contrived therefore to hide my emotion, and seem tranquil; and remained seated upon a log of wood at the farther end of the cavern—a calm and silent spectator of what was going on, but with painful anxiety for the event.

“Come, Henrique,” said the chief, “dinner hour approaches; our appetites will not let us wait for Moralez; and in his absence, we look to your skill.”

“I’ll do my best,” said Henrique. “I purchased some fresh meat in Murcia, and some oil and spices: and if the stew be not good, the fault will be mine:” and having said this, he approached the fire, which burned briskly on the ground, some dry rosemary bushes having just been thrown upon it; and immediately began the preparation of the stew. In the mean time, some flat boards were laid across two three-legged stools, forming a tolerable table, and a

cloth was spread over it: a few more stools, and a large log, were placed alongside of it; and plates, and spoons of good silver, were laid out. My seat was near to the fire: Henrique continued stirring the stew, and tossing in spice from time to time; and at length I saw him scatter in the pot, a handful of a greenish herb; and at the same moment the flame, catching some dry rosemary and blazing up, threw a bright glare on the face that bent over it, and showed me the fearful smile with which the prospect of speedy vengeance had illuminated it.

“Now, captain and comrades,” said Henrique, “dinner awaits your appetites. I’ll warrant the sauce excellent, and there’s plenty of it; so fall to, while I rinse out the goblet,—but leave a little for the merchant; ’t is likely you’ll see Moralez before dinner be over, and I fancy he’ll be jealous of my cookery.”

I remained seated where I was,—my eyes intently fixed upon the table and its guests; and without being liable to the charge of cowardice, I may admit, that the beating of my heart proved the importance of the stake I had in the drama that was acting. To say, that I did not pray earnestly for the success of a design upon which my own life depended, would of course be false; at the same time, there was something dreadful in the spectacle of eleven men sitting down to a feast from which they would never rise,—though I could not help admitting to myself, while I glanced from one ruffian-like countenance to another, that it seemed more like a carousal of fiends than of men; and that the sufferings and fate of the unfortunate Inez, might almost justify the awful revenge of her husband.

“Santa Maria!” said one of the men, “this

stew might have come from the archbishop's kitchen."

"We'll cashier Moralez," said another.

"Ay! by the blessed Trinity," said a third, "Henrique shall be our cook."

"That he sha-l-l," said a fourth, indistinctly.

"Jesus Mar——" said a fifth, scarcely articulating, and leaving the word unfinished.

"Gentlemen—comrades," said Henrique, stepping forward, "why do you not finish your sentences, and continue your dinner? Do not, I pray you, let conversation flag: and make a hearty meal; 'tis excellent—and 'tis YOUR LAST. Ay!" said he, his tone changing from irony, into a loud burst that rung through the cavern, while with eye flashing triumph, and a quivering lip, full of dreadful meaning, he stood with the gleaming knife in his hand, yet spotted with the blood of Moralez; "Ay! 'tis your last!!

Now, I have my vengeance: this hand shall avenge the blood of my Inez,—hell gapes for its prey.” A moment he remained silent, gazing upon the eleven, who sat motionless,—their grasp relaxed, their heads bent downwards; but their eyes fixed upon Henrique, and evidently conscious of the import of all that he spoke, and of their approaching destiny. “Retire from the cavern,” said he, turning towards me, “and leave me alone to the work of death and vengeance; I will rejoin thee.”

I was not sorry to be spared witnessing the horrible scene that I knew would ensue; and I quickly left the cavern, and making my way through the underwood, I proceeded a short distance up the bed of the stream, driving the mules before me; and then sat down upon a loose fragment of stone, to wait the re-appearance of Henrique.

Here I remained for some time alone, pondering upon the extraordinary scene in which I had been all but a participator, and upon the terrible revenge of Henrique; and congratulating myself upon my own escape: but until his re-appearance, I could not feel altogether at ease; and besides, I had left my gold behind me, in the cavern; and although I had no dread of so petty a passion as dishonesty, in one whose mind was capable of contriving and executing so dreadful a retribution, yet no man feels altogether at ease, when he has lost all hold upon what he possesses, however confident he may feel in its recovery.

At length, I saw Henrique emerge from the ravine, and advance towards me with hasty strides. As we approached each other, I almost trembled at the encounter. There was a savage frenzy in his eye,—an exulting smile on his lip,

—almost a demoniac joy spread over his countenance, from which one might well recoil. “I have done it :” said he,—“I have avenged my Inez ; for every drop of her blood, I made rivers flow ; I have wiped out all the indignities they offered her ; and they heard my words—I rung ‘revenge’ in their ears ! didst thou not hear me ?—but they heard ; and they saw whose hand it was that directed the blow to their ruffian hearts, and sent them unshriven to eternal perdition. No purgatory for them !—no masses for their souls ! they are sunk in the lowest depths of hell—and for ever. Vengeance is satisfied, and justice appeased ; and yet,” said he, more calmly, “I would rather have tugged with them a desperate strife, and sent them struggling into eternity : but that could not be—and they deserved not the death of men.”

I remained silent,—and after a considerable

pause, Henrique continued in a calm and entirely altered tone: "I know," said he, "that from this deed, just though it be, the church cannot absolve me, without great and lasting penance. I know that retribution belongs to God; and that I have robbed heaven of its prerogative. Had it not been for the hope of meeting my Inez in heaven, I would have died when I had accomplished my revenge; but this hope will now lead my steps, and direct my actions. Prayer and penance,—and if it must be, penitence, may in the end appease the offended prerogative of God; and through ages of purgatory, bring me at last into the presence of Inez, who is in Paradise. You, my friend, are now secure from danger,—I will lead you to the road which we forsook,—there is time before sunset to reach Chinchilla. I have restored your gold to the bag which was emptied; and

it lies yonder, at the entry to the ravine, which we must pass."

We now retraced our steps down the bed of the stream; the bag, which lay at the entrance to the ravine, I lifted upon my mule; and as I bent down, I could not help listening to hear if all was still within the cavern. There was no sigh, but that of the air among the aloes; and mounting one of the mules myself, and my companion mounting the other, as before, we went at a brisk pace towards the road which we had left; and in little more than an hour we had reached it.

"Here," said Henrique, "we part; our acquaintance has been short and eventful,—we can never more meet upon earth; but it is possible we may in heaven. You go into the world; I, to hide myself from it, in the recesses of a cloister. *Voya Ud con Dios.*"

“One moment stay,” said I: “thy soul may have need of masses; accept these fifty pieces, from a stranger who is perhaps indebted to thee for his life. Mayest thou meet Inez in heaven!”

He took the gold,—saying, “I need not bless thee for thy gift; my blessing would little avail:”—and there we separated: I followed the road to Chinchilla, and he darted among the algarobo thickets, and disappeared.

As I pursued my solitary way, I naturally ran over in my mind all the circumstances connected with the scene I had witnessed, and endeavoured to form some opinion as to the conduct of Henrique. It was evident, that he entertained doubts of his own innocence; and that, although his conscience offered no reproof for the death of Moralez, the scene in which he had last been so dreadful an actor, had so

impressed his mind, as to stagger his belief in the sinlessness of his revenge. That Moralez deserved death, and met it justly at the hands of the husband of Inez, I thought no one could deny; but whether it was justifiable to carry revenge so far as Henrique had carried it, seemed to admit of a doubt. I sincerely wished, however, that he might expiate his sins in this world; and meet the injured Inez in heaven.

As for my own position, I had every reason to be satisfied with the fortunate chance that threw me in the way of the stranger; for when I recollected the countenances and conversation of the ruffians who had now expiated their crimes, I could scarcely entertain any doubt, that if I had journeyed towards Chinchilla without the protection of Henrique, they might probably have had my blood as well as that of others to answer for. As for my money-bag, it had in-

deed suffered a small diminution; but when I recollected the purpose to which my fifty pieces were to be applied, I scarcely grudged them; so favourable is the effect, that prosperity exercises upon human character. That there may be such things as honest poor men, and roguish rich men, is no doubt true; but my knowledge and experience of the world, as well as my own feelings, tell me, that the most fruitful mother of crime is poverty; and that the truest cure for dishonesty, is to raise a man above temptation. For my own part, I was conscious of a wonderful improvement in my moral feelings,—and especially in my notions of honour, since my purse had become so respectable in bulk; and I resolved, that in future, although the increase of fortune should still be a prominent object, I would act in conformity with the reputation of a Caballero worth near ten thousand crowns; and

by no action cast any stigma upon the name of Don Pedro de Segura,—for I had prefixed the honourable appendage to my name from the time of my arrival in Alicante.

In such cogitations I passed my time, keeping my mule at a trot, and driving the other before me; until, when near sunset, I discovered in a hollow at a little distance, the town of Chinçilla, where I purposed spending the night; and, if possible, providing myself with another servant, to accompany me on my journey towards the metropolis.

Here, a pleasant discovery awaited me: while my gaspacho was preparing in the posada, I took the opportunity of opening my money bag, and emptying it upon my mattress; not because I entertained any doubt of the honesty of Henrique, but I thought it probable, that some of the robbers might have secretly anticipated the division

that was afterwards to take place, and have concealed some part of the money, either in the cavern, or about their persons. I had been struck with the weight of my bag when I lifted it from the ground, as well as when I took it from my mule's back, and carried it into my chamber; but this had been forgotten,—and did not in any degree diminish the surprise which I felt, when upon counting out my gold, and after having numbered all that belonged to me,—deducting the fifty pieces which I had given to Henrique,—there remained a large heap uncounted; which upon reckoning, I found to amount to more than one half of all I had already reckoned. This heap was composed of a great variety of coins: gold-ounces—pieces of eight—doubloons—pistoles—gold and silver crowns—pesetas,—and even reals, and quartos; and mixed with these, were several rings, and other jewels and orna-

ments. I could not doubt for a moment, but that this was the store which had been accumulated by plunder; and that Henrique, not feeling at liberty to enrich himself with the spoils of plunder, at the very moment when he had vowed mortification, and perhaps poverty, had thrown all into my bag—though he might at the same time feel himself justified in accepting the fifty pieces which I presented to him, as an offering of charity, and for the sacred purpose which they were destined.

To this unexpected addition to my fortune, I felt that I had no right; and yet the succession was in no way different from that which the death of Paulo the smuggler had opened to me: both were equally the fruits of crime, and the property of others. But restoration, in either case, was impossible. I had not, all of a sudden, become so great a stickler for honour, as to

refuse the gifts which fortune threw in my way, —all fortunes are not made honestly; and the son of an *escrivano*, or the daughter of a judge, might as well refuse the inheritance bequeathed by their fathers, as I, this legacy forced upon me by the conscientious Henrique. I resolved therefore, neither to throw it into the Xucar, nor to present it to the church; but only to act in conformity with my good fortune, and the station to which I aspired.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM WHICH MORE MAY BE LEARNED OF SPANISH CHARACTER, THAN WAS EVER BEFORE TOLD IN SO SMALL A SPACE.

WHILE I was busied over my gaspacho, the posadero, to whom I had communicated that I was in want of an attendant, came to inform me that several youths were waiting in the yard of the inn, desirous of engaging in my service.

“ Let them be introduced,” said I ; and four young men of eighteen or twenty years of age accordingly soon after entered.

“ Now,” said I, addressing the nearest, a swarthy youth, with keen eyes and dark curled hair, and whose face, as well as dress—for he

wore short linen drawers, and sandals—at once bespoke his Valencian origin, “what are thy recommendations? let me hear thee enumerate them.”

“Please your Grace,” said he, “it will be difficult for you to find a more discreet servant than myself. No one can live upon less than I can: I can breakfast upon a melon—go without dinner—and sup upon bread, with a seasoning of garlic. I am always respectful to my master, and obedient. I never inquire of myself, how he spends his time; nor run after him, to see where he goes. I know a handsome face when I see one, and never lose sight of my master’s interest; I have a quick invention, and am expert in the execution of a project,—and can use my heels or my knife, as may be most convenient. No one can brush a cloak better than I can, or adjust it upon my master’s shoulder with

a better grace. If my master be rich, I let no one know it, in case attempts be made upon his purse : if he be poor, I keep his secret ; I strut with my head as high as if I served a Canon, and make every one believe, that the melons we eat, and the wine we drink, are grown upon his own estates.”*

I saw that the fellow was a rogue—a cunning Valencian. “ Friend,” said I, “ thou wilt not suit me ; there is a peseta for thee ; ’t will get thee a better supper than bread and garlic.”

“ Now,” said I, addressing the next ; “ what hast thou to say for thyself ? ” “ Little, I fear, that can recommend me to your Grace,” said he ; “ excepting honesty, and industry.”

“ ’T is a large exception,” said I ; “ the servant who can sit beside a money bag without

* “ A lying Valencian,” is a common expression when speaking of the character of natives of different provinces.

letting his forefinger and thumb slip into it,—or deal out pesetas without letting any of them stick to his fingers, will find me a good master. Wait below, friend, till I have seen thy companions.”

“ Another, who by his tasseled jacket and hat, girdle, and slashed gaiters, I knew to be an Andalusian, now stepped forward, with an air that might have suited a Caballero.

“ Let me hear thy recommendations, friend,” said I.

“ They are neither few, nor trifling,” answered he. “ A gay Caballero, such as your Grace, cannot hire a more eligible servant. I take things as they come, and am never cast down; I play the guitar, sing love songs, and repeat ballads. While my master makes love to the Señora above, I amuse myself with the Doncella below. If he dances a fandango in

the hall, I occupy myself with a bolero in the kitchen. If castañets should at any time be wanting, I snap my fingers in such a manner that no one can tell the difference. I can assist in a serenade, or a mask,—and make one at a game of basto; and my master is always the greatest lord in the province, and I, the most honoured of servants.”

“ ’Tis a good catalogue,” said I; “ but thou ’lt scarcely suit so sober a Caballero as I am: a year ago, I might have hired thee; but at present take this *duro*, and make a holiday with thy *maja*.” *

A Castilian next advanced. I knew him by his look of poverty, and sombre air: “ what are thy qualities and recommendations, friend?” said I.

“ I am a Castilian,” said he, with an air of

* Sweetheart, in Andalusian.

superiority, "and though my suit be somewhat tattered, I would not disgrace a better."

"Thou shalt draw lots," said I, "with the Catalunian who is below, which shall have the place."

The Castilian, however, refused to put himself upon an equality with a Catalunian—and the Catalunian stipulating for leave of absence to hear mass every morning, and for a pilgrimage to Monserrat once every year, I resolved to continue my journey as I had begun it, and to trust to accident for supplying me with a servant.

Next morning I left Chinchilla, mounted upon one of my mules, and the other trotting before me; and a little after mid-day, I had entered the sierra de Alcaraz. While slowly following the path up a steep valley, I observed that I gained upon a man clothed in a friar's

habit, with a long staff in his hand; and from his halting pace, I guessed that he had come a long journey. “Good day, reverend father,” said I, when I had nearly overtaken him; “you appear to be fatigued, and as our roads seem to lie together, you had best mount that mule, and accept of a companion as far as we travel the same way.”

“I thank you, my son,” returned he, “for your proffered kindness to an unworthy servant of God: but my vow forbids that I should accept your offer — though I believe, indeed,” added he, “that I shall faint by the way.”

“That you shall not,” said I. “Your vow binds only yourself, not others. I am resolved upon having my own way; I am stronger than you are—and unless you mount the mule of your own accord, I will place you upon his back.”

The old man smiled, and yielded, and we walked our mules together.

“ From what visit of peace, reverend father,” said I, “are you returning to the accustomed quiet of your convent walls?”

“ I am returning,” said he, “from a pilgrimage of piety. I am returning from the Holy City—from Jerusalem.”

“ ’Tis a long pilgrimage,” said I; “and ardent must have been the piety, or necessary the penance, that carried a man of your years so far from his native land, and his convent gate.”

“ Ah !” returned he, “would there were greater piety in the world, and in the convents; I fear, my brethren too often forget, that the passive duties and negative piety of a convent do not exempt them from active beneficence, nor from the more arduous works of godliness which it is in their power to perform.”

“ I should guess, father,” said I, “ that you belong to the meritorious order, called ‘ John of God.’ ”*

“ I belong indeed to that order,” returned he; “ but do not call it meritorious,—there is no merit in the performance of an obligation; and is not charity the first and greatest?”

“ I was not aware,” said I, “ that it was customary for the friars of ‘ John of God’ to make

* The monks of this order do not spend their lives in sloth, but devote them to the succour of the wretched. To every convent of this order, there is an hospital attached; all who are sick, are admitted into it,—and the revenues of the convent, as well as the whole time of the monks, excepting that part of it which is allotted to their religious offices, are employed in the relief of the diseased and infirm. It is a singular fact, that when the French soldiers pillaged the convent of “ John of God,” at Granada, of its riches, they respected, by an act of singular forbearance, the character of the godlike founder. The body of the saint was preserved in the relicario in a silver urn, which was placed within a dome of silver supported by silver pillars. The soldiers carried off the dome and pillars; but left the urn.

pilgrimages: I understood that their duties lay within their convents."

"It is as you thought," returned he; "but I had long indulged myself with the expectation, that if it might please God that I should live to fulfil during thirty years, the active duties that are the obligation of our order, I might make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land: too often, we are inclined to make the infirmity of years an excuse for the neglect of active duties; and I believed, that there, I might gather strength to imitate the example of our founder, who, stricken in years, would have sunk under the burden of the sick man whom he carried, had not an angel descended, to help him in his work of charity."*

* This supposed miracle in the life of "John of God," has given occasion for one of the most splendid efforts of the genius of Murillo. The picture is preserved in the hospital de la Caridad at Seville. "John of God" is supposed to have gone, as was his usual practice during the

“ And yet, reverend father,” said I, “ I cannot help thinking, that the strength of which you speak, might have been gathered as well at home as in Palestine; and that the pilgrim is generally the dupe of false enthusiasm.”

“ Call it not false enthusiasm, my son,” said the pilgrim, stopping his mule, and laying his hand upon the neck of mine. “ Wonder rather, with me, that so small is the number of Christians who seek to warm their faith by looking upon the scenes amid which Jesus taught: true it is, that the song of the Apostles is heard no more in Judea; and that the disciples of a false worship, profane the holy places; but is there

night, to seek and succour objects of distress. The picture represents the saint carrying upon his back, a wretched being whom he had found in his walk, and bending under the weight of his burden; but suddenly, feeling himself relieved of a part of his load, he looks round, and sees by the miraculous light that encircles his heavenly visitant, that an angel has descended, to assist him in his work of charity!—*Spain in 1830.*

not in every spot of earth, blessed recollections, that cannot be obliterated by the trample of Infidels? Is there not still, the peaceful valley of Nazareth, where Jesus first abode,—the mount of Olives, and the garden of Gethsemane, that witnessed his agony,—Bethany, where Mary grieved, and Jesus wept, and Lazarus arose,—and Calvary, where Mercy triumphed? There is too little enthusiasm in religion, my son,—else Christian, as well as Mahomedan pilgrims,—pilgrims of piety, as well as pilgrims of curiosity, would be found. Men seek to view the memorials of ancient nations, and past times; and by a pilgrimage to fields of battle, and ruins of Pagan superstition, they excite a feverish sympathy with the deeds of arms, or perhaps, of patriotism, achieved by a Heathen people—and why do not men seek to warm their devotion by treading the ground sanctified by the footsteps

of Deity; and by gazing upon spots, where acts far more mightier were done; where, not kings, and heroes, and Pagan philosophers, but God himself dwelt; where victory was achieved, not by the sword, but by the oracles of Truth, and miracles of love; where Heathen sages taught not, but the inspired of Heaven; and where, above all, the recollections of the past, are not the mere shadows of what is gone for ever, fainter with every day that passes, but are linked with time while time shall last—stronger to the end—and even stretching forward into the regions of eternity?”

The old man had exhausted himself with the fervour of his enthusiasm; and perceiving that he was sincere in his piety, I forbore to reply—and indeed, to tell the truth, his defence of the pilgrimage seemed to me not without its merit.

At La Roda, our roads lay no longer together;

his being towards Toledo, and mine towards the capital; but I found so much good sense and instruction in the conversation of the pilgrim, that I did not feel disposed to separate from him; and besides, I felt that it would be but scanty humanity in me, were I to deprive him of the use of the mule, whose services his wearied limbs must have already gratefully acknowledged. I therefore resolved to change the direction of my journey, by which the pilgrim would not be the only gainer; since I had already felt a desire to visit the ancient and wealthy city of Toledo. The friar did not appear to be averse from my society; and so we continued to travel in company.

As we journeyed one evening, the second before our arrival in Toledo, I addressed my companion thus: "Do not imagine, reverend father, in what I am going to say, that I entertain any

thing else than the highest respect for the different religious orders; but I confess it has often struck me with astonishment, that so many thousands should shut themselves up in the gloomy recesses of a convent, and separate themselves from the world, where for my part, I think enjoyments are to be found that are not to be despised."

"Despised," returned the friar, "by those who find no pleasure in them. Ah! my son, little can those who live in the world imagine the holy calm, and sweet contentment, that do not always dwell indeed, but that may be found within a convent walls: and is it nothing to look forward to heaven?"

"But that hope," returned I, "may be indulged in the world, as well as in a cloister."

"With less security of fulfilment," said the friar: "and if there be nothing of so much im-

portance to men, as their happiness in eternity, it is rather to be wondered at, that so few choose the path most likely to lead to heaven.”

“ But,” returned I, “ the world demands its duties,—and men’s labours, and talents, and even virtues; and if all men renounced these, to hide themselves in convents—”

“ There is no danger,” interrupted the friar: “ the vast majority of mankind will always prefer the freedom of the world, to the confinement of a convent—and the indulgence of their passions, to the restraints of piety; but we were not discouraging of the effect of the monastic life upon the business of the world, but of its choice by individuals,—and I can truly say, that I have never known that choice repented of.”

“ Perhaps,” said I, “ there is not always much to regret: for if report speak truly, convent walls are not always a barrier against the enjoy-

ments of the world; and human passions are sometimes cherished in a cloister."

"Doubtless," returned the friar, "there are hypocrites in convents as well as in the world: but the remorse and punishment of the vicious, do not take away the serenity and reward of the good; and passions, which in the world, temptation would have inflamed, and indulgence strengthened, are quenched in a convent. Believe me, my son, that deadly sins are rare within a convent's walls: there may be too much negative piety; too little of active duty; too much indolence,—but heinous offences seldom stain our orders."

"But," said I, willing to continue the conversation, and to learn all that could be urged in favour of convents, "though there may be few heinous offences committed within convent walls, you have admitted that the life of a friar

is for the most part a life of sloth, which is doubtless a life useless to the world."

"What you have said, my son," returned the pilgrim, "cannot be answered in a few words; but I will endeavour to convince you of your error. Allowing what you say, to be true, that the life of a friar is a life of sloth (though in truth this cannot be said without many exceptions), I would inquire of you whether it be just to single out the inhabitants of convents, as the only class of idle persons in the world? Idleness, my son, is always a fault; but it is unfortunately not confined to convents: you, who appear to have seen the world, and have no doubt observed men in their various stations, know that the world is full of idleness. You have been in Seville,—or possibly in Malaga, or Granada, and have therefore seen the crowds of idlers who sit half the day in the shade, and

sleep the other half: you have perhaps even been in the capital, and have seen the thousands of idle persons who saunter through the streets, and throng the Prado; how many idle domestics, think you, are maintained by the Duke of Medina Sidonia? and how many caballeros and nobles spend their time in dressing, in eating, in gaming, on the Paseo, at the comedy, at the tertulia, in gallantry?—so that if all those throughout Spain who lead an idle life were collected together, they would very far outnumber the friars, upon whom alone the sin of idleness is laid. Besides, my son, vice and idleness often go hand in hand,—and in the world, were there are no restraints, idleness produces its natural effects, and vice accompanies it. It is better to be idle, than to be both idle and vicious,—and it cannot be just, to lay all the burden of idleness upon the friars; and to except

from it, that far greater number who are as idle as they, and who are vicious besides. Nor does it follow, my son, that they who are themselves slothful, are therefore useless to the world, and to their fellow-men. All who are in the world, are not obliged to labour; and yet those who are idle, as well as those who are industrious, have need of the necessities, and many of the luxuries of life; and by their wants, give occasion for the labour of others. Why should the monk, any more than the grandee, be singled out, as useless to society? The fields that belong to the convent, and that support the lazy monk, support the labourer also. Can the convent lands be tilled, or the crops be gathered in without labour, any more than those of the grandee? are the wine-press and the olive-press not needed for the oil and wine consumed in the convent, as well as for that which is con-

sumed in the city? and are not the labourers paid their hire? and are not the revenues of the convents expended nearly in the same manner as other revenues? Their own lands, like the lands of all proprietarios, supply the monks with bread and wine, and oil, and fruits,—while they are obliged, like other men, to go into the market for all that is not the produce of their possessions. If their revenues be greater than their necessities require, they lay up that which is unspent, like other men,—or add to the convent lands; and if they do well, as many do, they give of their abundance to the poor, who stand in need of it. You perceive then, my son, that ungodly men desire to attribute faults to those who are holier than themselves, and make distinctions which have no foundation in truth; and that even the most slothful fraternity of monks, contribute equally towards general in-

dustury, as other men who are not obliged to labour, and whose lands are sufficient, or more than sufficient for their subsistence. All that I have urged, is applicable to convents of women, as well as to convents of men : and against these, even the charge of indolence cannot be brought ; for in them every branch of useful and innocent female knowledge is taught ; and to them, the education of the young is chiefly committed."

"So well, father," said I, "do you defend the friars from the calumnies of the world ; and so pleasing is the picture which you draw, of their condition, that little persuasion would be required to induce me to turn monk ; though I confess, I would make choice of that order in which the fewest austerities are practised."

"Of that, my son," returned the pilgrim, "every man's own reason must judge : for my own part, I believe that the discharge of the

Christian duties of kindness and charity, is more acceptable to heaven, than the austerities of the Minims or the Carthusians; and with the natural partiality for my own order, I prefer it to all others; and believe that it is a more acceptable service to rise at midnight to succour the sick, than to sing a canticle." And conversing in this manner, we continued to journey slowly on our way, till towards evening we arrived at the small town of Yvenas, lying at the foot of the Toledo mountains, and within one day's journey of that city.

It is only the Minims and the Carthusians who forswear animal food; so that when the puchero was prepared, the worthy friar did not refuse to do moderate justice to its merits, or to take in his arms, the wine-skin of Val de Peñas that was produced by the posadero. Few travellers, and but few muleteers pass by way of

Yvenas; so that except the posadero and his wife, we had the venta to ourselves; and it was yet but early, when they having retired to their quarto, the friar and myself were left in possession of the bench, and the bright fire that blazed on the floor.

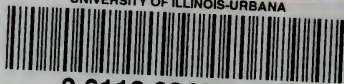
“Father,” said I, “the conversation which we have held by the way has greatly interested me; and I confess my curiosity has been somewhat excited, to know what events those have been that have led thee to embrace the monastic life: for although I can easily give credit to all thou hast said of the agreeable life which a good man may lead within the walls of a monastery, it is yet difficult for me to believe, that without a trial of the world, one will retire from all that it offers. No doubt, reverend father, the world has been tried by thee, and found faithless, or barren: and to my mind, there is more merit in

a choice of the monastic life after an experience of the world, than in blindly entering a convent without any knowledge of that which lies beyond it. But be that as it may, I would not willingly part with thee without learning what may be the inducements that lead men to become friars. To-morrow we shall reach Toledo, where thy journey ends; and these, therefore, are the last hours we shall spend together. Here we are alone; it is yet too soon to retire to rest, and I would fain employ the interval in listening to thy history.”

END OF VOL. II.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 084213872